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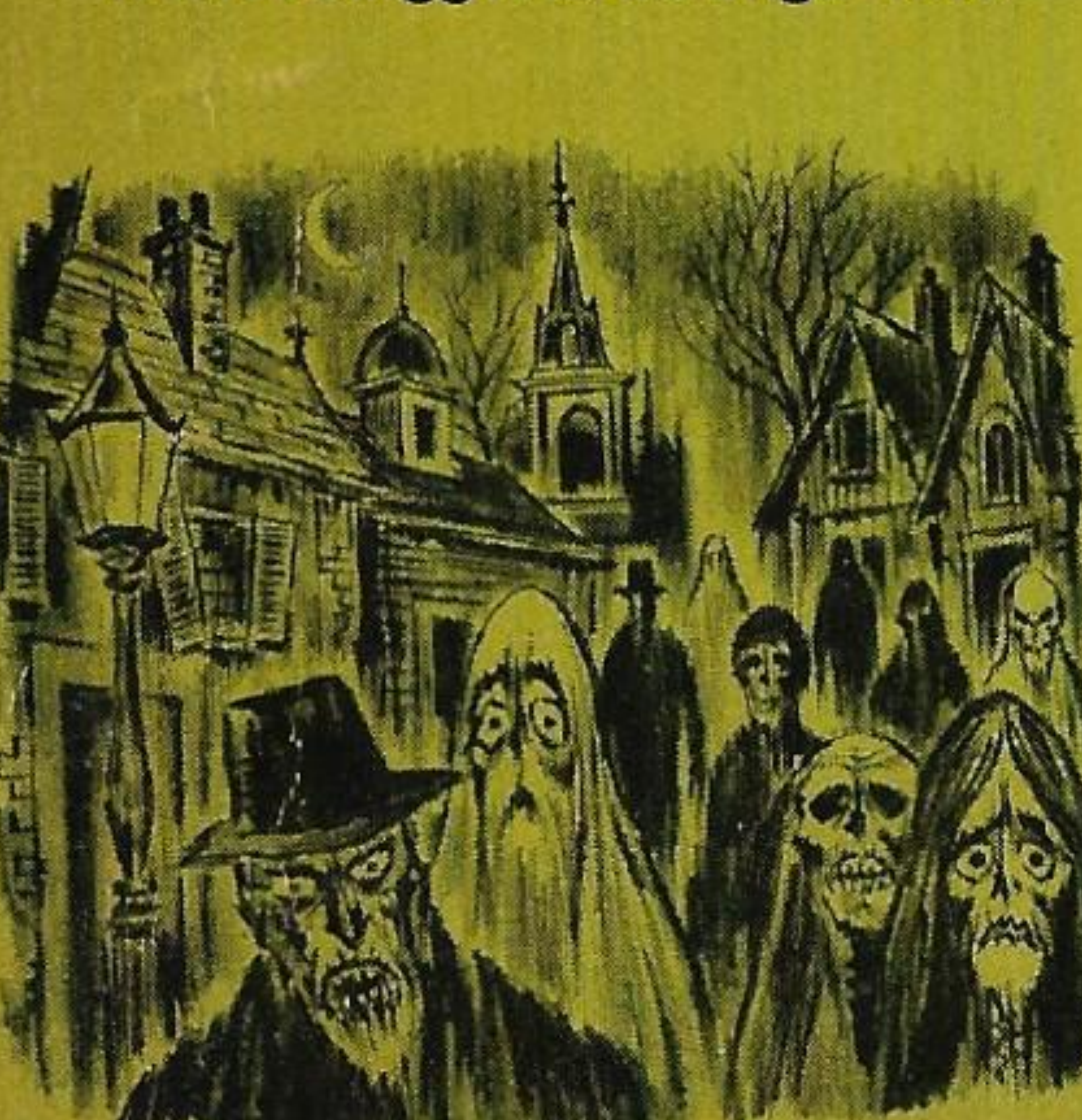
Fantastic,
fully-authenticated
accounts of life from
beyond the grave

Strange Encounters With Ghosts

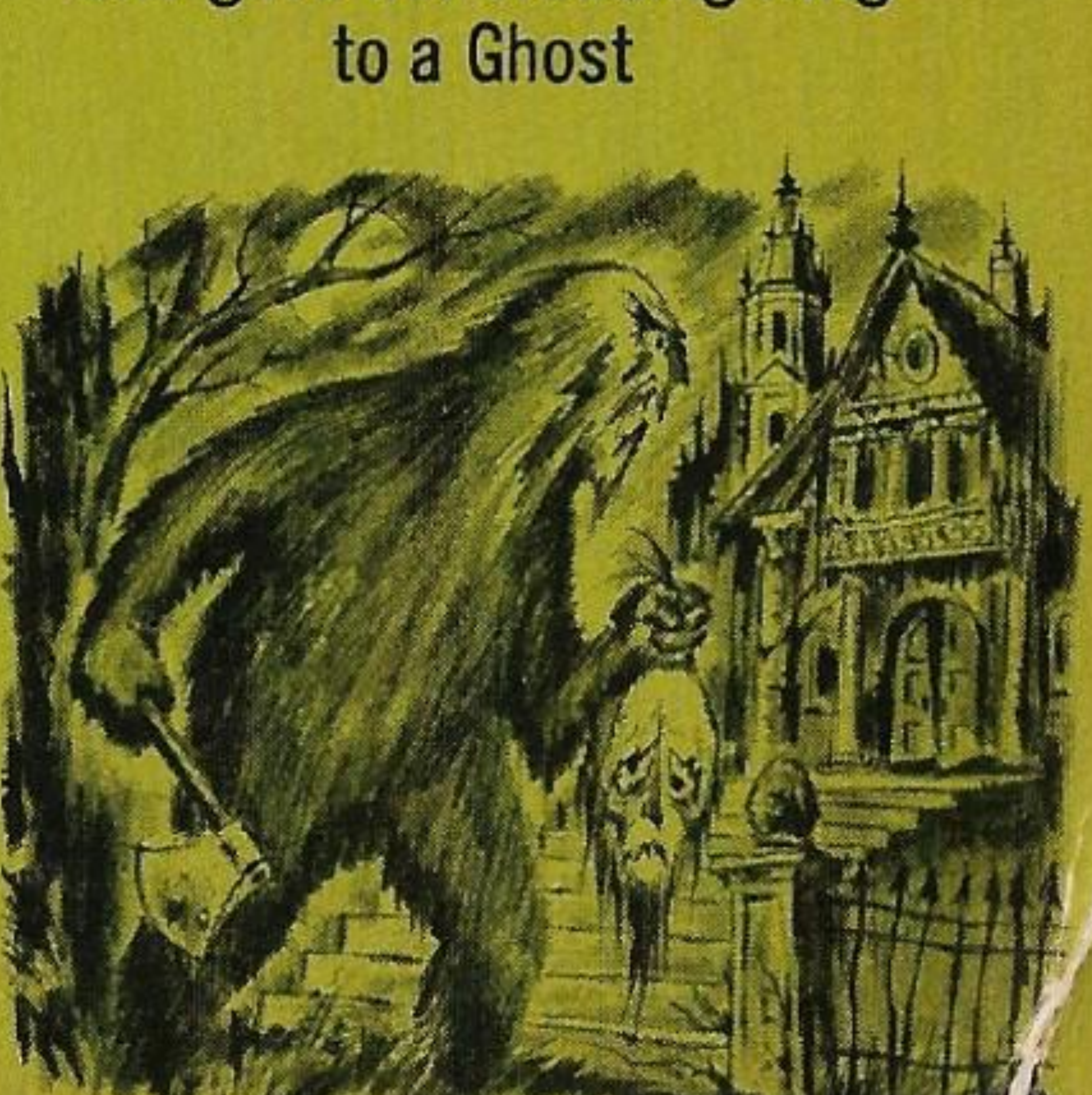
By Brad Steiger

A Gravedigger's Strange Tale

She gave her Wedding Ring
to a Ghost



The Village of the Walking Dead



The Demon of Devonshire

The "Ghost Detective" Speaks:

STRANGE ENCOUNTERS WITH GHOSTS will usher the reader into the world of moss-covered crypts, moldering manses, and mournful sighs floating up circular stairwells, but by no means will the reader be marooned in the dark shadows of some eerie gothic mansion.

These tales of people who have come face to face with the restless dead in our own contemporary jet-paced atomic age are factual and documented. Be assured that the supernatural, the unexplainable, and the terrifying do exist and will continue to exist . . .

—*Brad Steiger*

Strange Encounters With Ghosts

By Brad Steiger

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THERE'S A LITTLE GHOST IN RICHARD HARRIS' HOUSE

Rugged Irish actor Richard Harris, who has starred in such recent films as *A Man Called Horse* and *Cromwell,* says that there is only one problem with living in a haunted house, and that is that you cannot get your sleep.

Harris, who has gained fame as an actor, singer, director, and author, is an extremely talented conversationalist, but his talk inevitably returns to his haunted English mansion. The ghost that roams the manse is that of an eight-year-old boy, and the restless spirit has become an intriguing part of the actor's life. He has even had the ghost perform for friends.

But Harris also confesses to having had some terrific rows with the spectral lad. The ghost has awakened him at two in the morning, banging closet doors and running up the tower stairs. Harris has firmly explained to the ghost that it had better be good, because an actor needs his sleep. If the ghost wouldn't quiet down, Harris threatened, he would have it exorcised.

Finally, Harris built the ghost a nursery complete with toys at the top of the stairs, and now, the actor says, the ghost behaves a bit better.

Harris knows the boy-ghost's age, because old records reveal that an eight-year-old boy was buried in the tower.

Not long ago on Dick Cavett's popular late-night ABC talk show, Harris told of how he had had a burglar friend check out the mansion one evening before the actor moved in. Harris wanted to see just how burglar-proof the house was, and he judged that no one could offer a better evaluation of a house's security than one who makes his living invading others' domiciles.

Harris' friend managed an easy entrance, then just as he was preparing to leave, he heard the sound of a child crying. Puzzled, since he knew the house was empty, the burglar stood still for a few moments, attempting to determine the direction from which the sound was issuing.

The cry sounded again, and the man knew that he had made no mistake—there was a distressed child sobbing somewhere within the old mansion's darkened interior. The burglar reasoned that a child must have managed somehow to enter the house during daylight play hours and then became lost in one of its many rooms.

At last the burglar tracked down the sound of the crying to an upstairs room. The child had begun to cry vigorously and plaintively, and the man pushed open the door to the room from which the screams were unmistakably issuing.

He found himself in a room completely devoid of any other living human. Moonlight passing through a large window bathed the room in an illumination sufficient to permit an immediate census.

The burglar was quite alone, and an eerie silence had fallen upon the old mansion.

The burglar reported back to his actor friend and provided him with the necessary details on how to make the old mansion a bit more burglar-proof. Then he added: "But that's a strange house you've got there, mate!"

The house is no longer strange to Harris, and the actor describes the place as a glorious mansion with marble, a dining room with stained-glass windows decorated with signs of the Zodiac, a library with carved biblical figures, a frieze of strange wild plants designed to appear as though one were in the sea looking at the sky with stars in the background.

Harris claims that he discovered the home when he was

twenty-four years old, when, one morning, he unaccountably woke up in its gardens in London. He had no idea how he got there, but he knew that he had to own that beautiful house. The actor says that he often went back there to sleep in the garden.

Fourteen years later, Harris learned that the owners might be selling the house to a development, so he appealed to the preservation society to declare the house a historical building. The furious owners wouldn't sell to Harris, and they made an agreement with Liberace, the colorful pianist.

Harris found that he couldn't budge the pianist even with an offer of 25,000 pounds more than he was paying. But the actor was determined not to let Liberace have the dream house. It was at this point that Harris somehow discovered that Liberace had not actually signed anything.

The actor will not disclose exactly how he managed to close the deal in his favor. He says that such knowledge is his secret. "It was all a mystical thing," he insists. "It was meant to be."

Harris' only regret is that his motion picture career keeps him traveling so much that he cannot enjoy his haunted mansion to the fullest.

"Right now," he complains, "I have to make buckets of money just to support my haunted house and its noisy little ghost."

THE MAN WHO RUNS A SANCTUARY FOR HOMELESS GHOSTS

It was just after dark when medium Donald Page and Reverend John D. Pearce-Higgins, an eminent canon of the Church of England, arrived at the house in Stoke Newington, England, where a disagreeable ghost had been annoying and frightening women.

"The ghost was a most distressed thing," the medium recalled. "He was the spirit of a cobbler who had passed from the earth plane about 80 years ago. He had been an ugly, stooped-over dwarf despised by women. Because he had been so often humiliated by women when he was alive, he had decided to stick around his old shop after death and take his revenge on women by frightening them half to death."

The ghost-hunting duo soon learned that the haunted house had been constructed on the site of the cobbler's old shop.

"No wonder he has been so angry toward you," Page explained to the terrified lady of the house.

But once Page was in trance, he found himself possessed by the spirit of the woman-hating cobbler, and the vengeance-seeking spirit did not go for the lady of the house, but for the throat of the medium's assistant, Mrs. Edna Taylor.

"It was most fortunate that Canon Pearce-Higgins was there to pull me off Mrs. Taylor," Page said later.

"The spirit was utilizing my body the way one would pull the strings of a puppet, and I had no control over my own person," the medium explained. "Eventually, the Canon managed to tranquilize the spirit of the cobbler, and we brought the ghost to my sanctuary where my spirit guides could help him on his way."

In the spring of 1969, Donald Page told reporter Peter Thompson that he had been running a home for wayward ghosts for nearly three years. Page, who has been a medium since he was fifteen, freely admitted that he kept a spare bedroom in his London apartment expressly for the purpose of offering shelter and spiritual comfort to the ghosts that he had dispossessed from their old haunts—where their presence had been decidedly unwelcome by the human occupants.

The small guest room, decorated with psychic artwork, affords the displaced spirit an opportunity to adjust to life in a transitional state before it moves on to a higher, more spiritual plane of existence.

Page explained that the entities who used his guest room were ". . . evil earthbound spirits who have been bothering people."

The medium emphasized the point that one could not simply remove such spirits from the places they haunt and leave them to flounder helplessly in a spiritual twilight zone.

"These spirits must be helped out of their earthbound state and assisted in continuing their journey to paradise," Page said. "The ghost sanctuary is essential in this respect."

Page went on to state that they permit the ghosts to stay in the sanctuary until they have regained their spiritual equilibrium and feel like moving on to the next plane of existence. Canon Pearce-Higgins, together with Page's spirit guides, conditioned the spirits for the journey from the earth state into the astral plane, then ". . . into the etheric state, in which the spirits will find peace and contentment."

Medium Page and clergyman Pearce-Higgins have been a ghost-hunting team for more than fifteen years, and they claim to have helped hundreds of ghosts to find peace.

"Why, in the two and one-half years that I've kept the guest room in my present apartment," Page declared, "we've extended hospitality to 300 spirits."

Canon Pearce-Higgins keeps a well-documented account of the ghost-hunting team's experiences for the Church of England's Fellowship for Psychical Research. The cleric has stated that their primary aim is to help both the haunters and the haunted and that they take their work very seriously. When the two men aren't busy helping restless spirits to move along to higher realms, Reverend Pearce-Higgins is minister of London's Southwark Cathedral and Page heads a Spiritualist church, the Fellowship and Brotherhood of Paul.

When they receive a request from someone who is experiencing an unpleasant haunting, the "ghost squad" goes into immediate action. If investigation reveals that the haunting is being caused by a troubled ghost, Page goes into a trance and permits the spirit to possess him.

"That's the point where my spirit guides take over," Page told reporter Thompson. "It's up to them to remove the spirit from me. Then my spirit guides take the troubled spirit to my sanctuary. They get to my apartment long before we do, of course."

The spiritual ministers keep their ailing ghosts in the sanctuary for as long as it takes to assist them in the transitional period. During this time of spiritual therapy, the two men and their assistant, Mrs. Taylor, are able to keep the troubled spirits in a happier frame of mind, and with the help of Page's spirit guides, they are able to show the confused ghosts the way to continue their journey on the other side.

In May 1971, Donald Page told writer John Dodd that by that date his personal tally of ghosts helped along was around 500. By now, the medium told the journalist, the ghost-relief team had developed a routine. Canon John Pearce-Higgins held a short Requiem Mass, then Page slipped into trance and made contact with his spirit guide to allow the ghost to speak.

Canon Pearce-Higgins said that, in his estimation, the Spiritualist philosophy of death explained ". . . the New Testament, the Resurrection, the 'many mansions' of God's house, the miracles. I want to see the established churches acknowledging these principles."

The Canon admitted that many people might doubt the efficacy and the validity of their work, but ". . . all I know is that when we go into a house and do our stuff and the phenomena stop, we assume it is because of what we have done."

SILVER CLIFF'S GHOSTLY MINERS

In the little town of Silver Cliff, in the Wet Mountain Valley of Colorado, ghostlights have plagued the local cemetery since 1880. Today, Silver Cliff is itself little more than a ghost town: in 1880 it boasted a population of 5,087; today it has only 110 inhabitants.

Word of the ghostlights reached the mass media in the spring of 1956 in the *Wet Mountain Tribune*, and on August 20, 1967, in *The New York Times*. According to local folklore, the lights were first seen in 1880 by a merry group of miners passing the cemetery. When they saw the flickering blue lights over the gravestones, they swallowed their laughter in sober gulps and left the area in a hurry.

Since that time, the lights have been watched by generations of tourists and residents of Silver Cliff. Several witnesses have noted that the curious blue lights cannot be seen as clearly on the sandstone graveyard markers. This observation has convinced a number of theorists that the lights are only a reflection of houselights in the valley.

County Judge August Menzel says that he can readily counter that theory. He remembers the night when everyone in Silver Cliff and nearby Westcliff shut off their lights. Even the streetlights were turned off, Judge Menzel recalls, "but the graveyard lights still danced."

If the ghostly graveyard lights cannot be attributed to

the reflection of ordinary house and municipal lights, just what can they be? Oldtimers and younger speculators have come up with many suggestions:

*The ghostlights are reflections from the stars (yet the lights are just as clear on a starless, moonless night).

*The ghostlights are caused by phosphorescing ore and glowing wood (but the darker the night, the brighter the lights).

*The ghostlights are caused by radioactive ores (but Geiger counters employed to cover the entire area have discovered no trace of radioactivity).

*The ghostlights are perpetrated by hoaxsters with luminous paint (but no evidence has ever been found to support such a charge).

*The ghostlights merely reflect the mercury vapor of the Westcliff streetlights (but during a Westcliff power failure the lights remained undimmed . . . and there were no mercury vapor streetlights in 1880).

Even the most persistent seekers of a plausible explanation for the Silver Cliff mystery lights have been forced to admit their total bafflement. To add to every theorist's confusion, the lights can never be approached for closer examination. As soon as anyone comes too near, the lights seem to disappear, only to pop up again in another section of the cemetery. Photographers have been engaged to capture the lights on film, but none of them have been too successful in obtaining a clear image of the elusive blue lights.

In the August 1969 issue of *National Geographic*, Edward J. Linehan, the magazine's assistant editor, wrote of his observation of the Silver Cliff ghostlights.

Linehan drove to the old cemetery in the company of Bill Kleine, proprietor of the local campground. It was a cloudy, overcast night, and after they had bounced about a mile across the prairie outside of Silver Cliff, Kleine told the journalist to shut off his headlights. The two men climbed out of the car, stood for a few moments in silence.

"There!" Kleine directed in an urgent whisper. "See them there? And over there?"

Linehan saw "them"—"dim, round spots of blue-white light" glowing ethereally among the graves. He saw another, closer at hand. He stepped forward for a better look and the lights vanished.

The two men walked about the cemetery for fifteen minutes, pursuing one ghostlight, then another. Linehan aimed his flashlight at one spooklight and snapped it on only to reveal a tombstone in his beam.

Kleine told Linehan that some people thought that the lights were due to phosphorescence caused by decaying wood in the crosses. Others had theorized that the ghostlights were simply reflections from the townlights of Silver Cliff or Westcliff. Linehan looked back at the two small western towns. The tiny clusters of lights seemed much too faint to be able to be reflected way out there in the cemetery.

"Trouble is," Bill Kleine went on, "my wife and I have both seen these lights when the fog was so thick that you couldn't see either one of those towns at all."

Many of the oldtimers in the area look with amusement upon efforts to explain the lights away as some phenomenon due to unknown, but natural, causes. According to these elderly men and women and the legend they still repeat, the old cemetery became the final resting place for many miners who died while scraping precious ores out of the mountain valley. The flickering globes of the graveyard ghostlights resemble, so say the oldtimers, the little lights worn on the miners' caps; and, legend has it, the eerie lights are actually the restless souls of the miners who still search for the bonanza they never found in physical life.

If the mystery lights of Silver Cliff cemetery are truly the illuminated souls of frustrated miners, then they certainly provide a ghost story devoid of any elements of subjective emotionality and offer an ever-present proof for the most skeptical doubter of such phenomena. Until someone someday offers evidence to the contrary, romanticists will probably cherish the ghost story potential of the Silver Cliff cemetery. As Edward Linehan concluded in his article in *National Geographic*:

"No doubt someone, someday, will prove there's nothing at all supernatural in the luminous manifestations of Silver Cliff's cemetery. And I will feel a tinge of disappointment. I prefer to believe they are the restless stirrings of the ghosts of Colorado, eager to get their Centennial State on with its pressing business: seeking out and working the bonanzas of a second glorious century."

THE RAMBUNCTIOUS GHOST THAT MESSED UP MILADY'S CHAMBER

In Plymouth, England, shortly before Christmas, 1965, Mrs. Elsie Robertson was alone in her bedroom when her robe, which had been hanging on a door, suddenly wadded itself in a ball, became airborne, and threw itself upon her.

Her husband, Stanley, and her daughter, Carol, came running in answer to her screams. "What is it, Mom?" they both wanted to know.

"My robe . . . my robe threw itself off the door at me!" she gasped her explanation.

"Now, Mom," Carol laughed, "what kind of a silly tale would you be telling us so close to Christmas?"

"It's God's honest truth," Mrs. Robertson swore. "That flaming thing came right off the door at me!"

"Are you sure, Mother?" Robertson asked a bit cautiously, not wishing to anger his already distraught wife.

"Stanley Robertson," she sighed in exasperation, her hands on her hips, "as certain as I am that you're my husband is as certain as I am that robe came flying at me."

"Very well, then," Robertson said, either believing her or deciding it was best to humor her. "Let's put that nasty robe in the hall closet. And to boot," he said, as he opened the closet door, "let's just put this heavy vacuum cleaner on top of it. That ought to hold the pesky thing down!"

"Stanley," Mrs. Robertson frowned, "don't you be

treating me like I was some idiot child. That blasted robe . . ."

Robertson held up his hand like a traffic officer halting an erratic motorist. "I believe you, Elsie. The robe is safely put away now."

It was only the very next evening, however, when Robertson and his daughter were once again roused from their television program by a frantically screaming Mrs. Robertson.

"Oh, Dad," Carol sighed, "it can't be that blinking robe again!"

"Watch your tone of voice, child," Robertson said, rising to see to his wife.

He found her standing in the middle of the room, distraught, stifling screams.

The robe lay at her feet.

"It came flying right at me," Elsie Robertson managed to say between sobs. "It just came flying right at me like some angry bird!"

"It can't be haunted, can it?" Carol asked. "Our flat, I mean. It's less than a year old. I thought only creaky old houses could be haunted."

"We'll soon have done with it whatever it is that's going on around this flat!" Stanley Robertson decreed.

And with those words he snatched up the robe and locked it in an outside building.

All went well for the next few nights. Then, one evening as the Robertsons were seated in their living room, they were puzzled to hear a strange tapping noise issuing from the area of Mrs. Robertson's bedroom.

"It can't be that bloody robe come back!" Robertson shouted in order to drive away the little tingles of fear that had begun to travel up his own spine.

When the Robertsons investigated, they found Elsie's bedroom in chaotic disarray. Her bedclothes and toilet articles had been scattered over the floor, and the bedroom furniture had been moved about or tipped over on edge.

The police did not respond to the Robertsons' tale of ghostly hi-jinks, so Elsie Robertson turned to Reverend

Charles Vickery, vicar of St. Mary's Church in Plymouth.

The clergyman told a reporter for the *London Sunday Express* that close quizzing of the family had convinced him that the Robertsons had not been victims of wild imaginations. Further investigation revealed that although the Robertsons lived in a block of forty new flats, the site had previously been occupied by some extremely old buildings. Perhaps, by way of theorization, Mrs. Robertson's bedchamber had been constructed in an area in which dealt an entity who did not believe in sharing territory.

Reverend Vickery went on to say that he had reported the case to the Bishop of Exeter, Dr. Robert Mortimer, who had instructed him to perform a service of exorcism to put the entity to rest. Apparently, this was one restless spirit that respected the words of a clergyman, for there have been no subsequent reports from Elsie Robertson's bedroom.

THE UGLY WITCH IN THE BACKROOM

When the William Adams family moved into the gray frame house on Martin Street in Detroit, Michigan, only the children and the dog seemed to sense that something loathsome had made its abode in the back bedroom.

Because it was so small and so far removed from the rest of the house, Adams began to sleep in it when he came home from the midnight shift at the Cadillac plant. It was not long before Adams began noticing the strange and uncomfortable effect that the back bedroom seemed to have on him. He started having horrible nightmares that would leave him limp with fear. It was only after he had resumed sleeping in the master bedroom, however, that he really began to associate the nightmares with that tiny back bedroom.

In August of 1962, Adams' grandmother came to visit them from Georgia. Both the Adams assumed that Bill's reaction to the back bedroom had been due to some kind of personal association, so they gave Grandmother Adams the room during her stay.

The next morning she came to the breakfast table pale and shaken. Grandmother Adams became so uneasy in the house that she cut short her stay and returned home.

On October 27th, an old friend, S. Patterson, arrived to spend a few days with the Adams. Since they knew Patterson to be a practical, matter-of-fact Southerner, Bill and Lillian decided that he would be their final test. If Patterson could spend a night in the back bedroom without suffering any ill effects or reporting anything strange, perhaps they had merely let their imaginations gain the upperhand. They would not even mention their own unpleasant experiences with the room.

But Patterson had been in the room only a short time when a hideous, haglike creature drove him out into the kitchen. His words of explanation were interrupted by a terrible wailing—a mournful, half-human, half-animal sound.

Lillian Adams later said that the sound was like nothing she had ever heard before. And then there came an awful smell that made both of them sick. The stench was coming from the backroom from which they heard the moaning.

Within a few minutes, police officers were searching the house from attic to incompleted basement. They were unable to find anything that would provide a rational explanation for the apparition which Patterson had seen or for the eerie moaning and the sickening odor which both Patterson and Lillian Adams had described.

When Adams got home from the plant on Sunday morning, October 28th, his wife and friend told him, as calmly as they could, what they had experienced.

That night, at about 7:30, Adams lay down in the back bedroom. He had reached a decision that, once and for all, he would either conquer whatever inhabited the room or he would admit defeat and let the thing have the bedroom—and the house—to itself.

Then Adams sensed a presence in the room. He turned to look into a horrible face only inches from his own. The eyes stared past him and the mouth moved to talk, but only a hissing noise came out—and a terrible stench!

Adams ran out of the bedroom, screaming wildly, ripping handfuls of hair from his head as he ran into the kitchen. Finally, Lillian and Patterson managed to throw a blanket over Bill and wrestle him to the floor. The same nauseating stench they had noticed the night before once again permeated the house.

After Bill had regained his senses and told of the ghastly face of indescribable evil that he had seen, they grabbed the sleeping children from their beds and fled in the night to neighbors. They found another house to rent, and during a series of daylight visits, moved all their furniture out of the house on Martin Street.

THE GHOSTLY EXHIBITS IN ROME'S PURGATORY MUSEUM

Some shreds of charred cloth . . . an ancient painting . . . a bit of wood . . . some old prayer books. Each of the above rather mundane items has a very special reason for being included in the world's eeriest museum. Each of those items bears the imprint of a hand or finger that has been burned into its surface by ". . . some soul who came back from purgatory asking for prayers that would release him into paradise."

Rome's *Museo del Purgatorio*, Purgatory Museum, also known as the House of Shadows, has amassed a most unique collection of artifacts that offer "proof that some people have returned to earth from the beyond."

The Purgatory Museum was built and assembled with the encouragement of the Popes Pius X and Benedict XV, but today the Vatican nourishes a studied silence concerning the collection of "signs of those who return."

Father Ernesto Ricasoli, the curator of the strange museum, claims that each of the items in the eerie collection has been placed there because its history has been exhaustively documented.

"But, of course," the curator shrugged, "it is up to each individual visitor to decide for himself what to believe or what to disbelieve."

The curious visitor of the House of Shadows may see the burned handprint of Madame Leleux on the cloth of her son's sleeve. According to the documentation on this display, the spirit of Madame Leleux returned to confront her son on June 21, 1789, after she had been dead for twenty-seven years.

The anguished spirit beseeched her son to change his errant ways and won from him a promise that he would forsake his sinful path. Then, to convince him of the validity of his encounter with a shade of the departed, the apparition touched his sleeve.

With the sign of the scorched handprint on his sleeve to keep him ever mindful of his promise to his mother's spirit, the younger Leleux reestablished Christian principles in his lifestyle, founded a new religious order, and became the very model of a pious and charitable gentleman.

In another display case, one may see the prayer book of Margherita Demmerle, with the burnt hole left in its pages by a mother-in-law who returned from beyond the grave.

According to the tradition behind this artifact, Margherita's mother-in-law, deceased for thirty years, appeared before the startled woman and begged her to undertake a pilgrimage and have two masses said for her. A compliant and well-meaning daughter-in-law, Margherita did as the spirit had asked and carried out the request.

Upon her return from the pilgrimage, Margherita Demmerle was once again visited by the apparition. "Blessed daughter," the joyful ghost greeted her, "you have liberated my soul from purgatory."

The ghost made a motion as if to leave, but Margherita raised her hand in protest.

"Please, Mother," she called to the departing spirit, "please give me a sign to prove to all doubters that you were actually here."

The spirit seemed to summon all its energy to build up a more solid form, then it placed a trembling hand on a nearby open prayer book.

"There, my daughter," the ghost said, now rapidly fading into nothingness until her last words were but a faint whisper. "Let that mark stand for all to witness."

Margherita reached for the still smoking prayer book and found that her spectral visitor had burned tell-tale fingerprints and one rather deep hole in the prayer book.

"That wonderful experience occured in 1914," Father Ricasoli will tell visitors to the museum, "and the prayer book is now on permanent display along with our other relics."

Some authorities believe that the most important artifact in the Purgatory Museum is the piece of wood that was once part of the top of a worktable owned by Mother Chiara Isabella Fornari, prioress of the Clarisse Sisters of Todi. On the long-cherished relic are the print of a left hand and a crude cross, both burned into the wood.

The information concerning this artifact states that on the night of November 1, 1731, Mother Chiara Isabella Fornari received a most unusual visitor in the ethereal person of the deceased Father Panzini, who had been Abbot of Mantova. The nun would never release the details of her conversation with the apparition of the priest, but she did reveal the several signs of his spiritual presence which Father Panzini had left with her. According to Mother Chiara Isabella, the ghost had drawn the sign of the cross with his finger, then left his entire handprint on the table.

Father Ricasoli told correspondent Nino Lo Bello that the Assortment in the Purgatory Museum had been begun by Father Vittore Jouet toward the end of the 19th century. Father Jouet had made the collection of these unique relics an abiding interest and he traveled extensively to accumulate a large collection of evidence of survival beyond the grave.

"The museum remained opened until 1920, when Father Jouet's successor, Father Gilla Gremigni, decided to reorganize the exhibit and eliminate all but the most thoroughly authentic pieces," Curator Ricasoli told the journalist. "The museum stayed closed for thirty years, and when it reopened, only a very small number of 'things' had survived penetrating inquiry."

Nino Lo Bello reports that the remaining exhibits are on display in a large cupboard in the annex of the Sacro Cubre del Suffragio church, which flanks the Tiber River on the Lungotevere Prati.

"It is within eyeview of Rome's skyline landmark, the Castel Sant-Angelo," he writes. "There is no sign or arrow to indicate the museum, so visitors must ring the sacristy bell and ask the custodian for the *Museo del Purgatorio.*"

GHOST MONSTERS OF THE MIDWEST

In the winter of 1969, three members of a party of 12 deer hunters reported seeing a large, seven-foot, apelike creature waving its arms angrily at them as they crossed a swampy area near Fremont, Wisconsin. The hunters swore to have sighted the creature at about high noon.

Investigating game wardens said that while they believed the hunters were sincere, they could find no concrete evidence that such an animal existed in the Fremont area.

"Maybe the creature was just the product of overactive imaginations," commented game warden Larry McKevitt.

But an increasing number of hunters and fishermen and those who drive late-night truck routes in the wild country that lines the upper-Mississippi swear that the weird and monstrous creatures that they have been sighting belong neither to the realm of imagination nor to the uncorked whiskey bottle. The creatures may, however, belong to another plane, or dimension, of reality.

In 1968, a young biology student from an area college told this author that he encountered an apeman while driving on Highway 52 some distance from Rochester, Minnesota, on his way to Decorah, Iowa.

It was about ten o'clock in the evening when his headlamps picked up the form of someone crouching at the side of the highway. The student, Bob Wayne, thought that someone might be injured or ill, and he pulled his car onto the shoulder of the highway. When the headlights caught the "someone" in full illumination, Bob saw that he had encountered something beyond his knowledge.

"I could see that its features were apelike and its shoulders were heavy," he told me. "The thing ran up the steep embankment to the shelter of the woods as easily as if it was running up a flight of steps.

"I saw that the thing had been kneeling over a recently killed rabbit. I picked up the rabbit, and the thing up on the embankment raised itself up to its full height and barked what sounded like a harsh cough of anger and protest. It obviously thought that I was going to steal its dinner, and I wasn't about to argue with it. I ran back to my car."

On his way to Decorah, Bob had time to ask himself a lot of questions in an attempt to explain away his experience, but he decided that the creature could not have been a bear or a wolf—animals which in themselves would have been rare for southern Minnesota.

"That thing had been crouching in a humanlike position," Bob said. "That was why I thought that I had seen a human being in trouble. When my car approached, it turned to look over its shoulder. The head had definitely turned on a neck, and I know that neither a bear nor a wolf can look over its shoulder—they have to turn their entire bodies. And there was no snout on its face. Its features were definitely humanoid.

"The thing that really capped it for me," Bob went on, "was the fact that while it was running away from me, I saw well-developed buttocks. Buttocks are a distinctly human characteristic. No bears, wolves, or apes have buttocks. What I saw could only be described as a naked, hairy wildman!"

While George Munson was checking his trapline along the Iowa River on a December morning, he found startling evidence that some naked, giant wildman had been pulling up his traps outside of Bluffton, Iowa, but he was glad he found no more than the brute's footprints.

"Whoever made those prints would have to wear at least size 16 shoes," Munson told me, "but this big nut was running around barefoot in below zero temperature!"

Munson followed the tracks into a forested region for about three-quarters of a mile until the footprints led to an area of boulders and rocks.

"That big galoot knew where he was going," the trapper told me. "I had the funniest feeling that he was watching me all the time that I was following those tracks. And me with a puny little .22 rifle!"

One afternoon I discussed the possibility of large humanoid creatures existing undetected in such a heavily populated area as northeastern Iowa with Munson and his friend, Jim Andrews.

"Bah!" they retorted almost in unison. "This area isn't heavily populated at all! People always think Iowa and Minnesota are teeming with little farm communities and outlying farms. There are hundreds of thousands of square acres of forested regions along the Mississippi and up on the bluffs where no one ever goes."

Andrews admitted that he and Munson were the last of a dying breed in the Midwest in that they were outdoorsmen who could subsist off the natural resources of an area even in sub-zero temperatures.

"I could hide an army right here in this corner of Iowa," he stated firmly. "Or to put it another way, George and I could hide out in these hills for weeks with a National Guard unit searching for us and I'll bet that they would never catch sight of us."

Munson ground out his cigarette in an ashtray. "So imagine some kind of cross between a man and an ape whose presence is only suspected by a few hunters and farmers. With his instinct for survival, any sighting of him is going to be strictly accidental."

I asked the men where such a creature might live.

"Man," Andrews answered, "this whole area is undermined with caves that may or may not be interconnected. Hundreds of farmers have sinkholes in their fields that may, in turn, connect with some of these caves."

And, I questioned, would there be a food problem for the apemen?

"Naw," Munson replied. "In the summer they've got field corn to grab; in the winter, they could scoop the corn out of the cribs. In both cases, the farmers in this area will blame deer or raccoons."

"Except like last winter when several farmers were turning in reports of a big bear raiding their bins," Andrews laughed. "I don't think it was a bear that they were seeing."

Andrews has made quite a study of the Sasquatch mystery, and he offered these observations:

1. Since the thing appears to be a combination man-animal, it probably combines an instinct for survival with a rudimentary intelligence—this combination would make it extremely difficult to track down in the wilderness. Any sightings of the creatures would be accidental.

2. The creatures must be social animals living in families, cooperating on food gathering, huddling together in caves for warmth. Although a woodsman knows that one never finds the body of animal in the wild—natural scavengers "clean" up the remains—the Sasquatch may drag a fallen member back to cave and may even observe extremely primitive burial customs.

3. There is enough wild country even in the "heavily populated" Midwest for such creatures to live virtually undetected and be glimpsed only on occasional forays into a farmer's yard for food.

On January 14, 1971, a large, hungry dog received the blame when six hogs and three dogs were found slain, mutilated, and partially eaten at two farms a short distance east of Waterloo, Iowa.

The tracks found at the scene of the slaughter puzzled authorities. Some experts insisted that the prints were those of a large mountain lion that had somehow found its way to Iowa.

But later three lawmen reported that they had sighted and trailed a large dog that they believed responsible for killing the nine farm animals.

"He was an extraordinarily big dog, and pretty fast, too," said Walt Berryhill, a La Porte City police dispatcher. "We saw him jump over fences."

Berryhill, a La Porte city policeman, and a Black Hawk County deputy sheriff described the animal as being "brownish yellow" in coloration. At this writing, over a month later, the large dog with the voracious appetite has not been seen again, nor has he sampled any more plump Iowa livestock. Could the monster have found its way back into the dimension from whence it had come?

Farmers in the Midwest often seem to encounter unidentifiable footprints left by unknown animals that have mauled their livestock, then disappeared without a trace. Woods-wise men with a knowledge of the Sasquatch say the giant apemen are primarily vegetarians, but theorize that the huge creatures may occasionally sample meat out of curiosity. The fact that so many farmers find their dogs slain with necks and backs broken may be an example of the Sasquatch's powerful ability to defend itself, rather than a quest for fresh meat.

On April 10, 1970, Mike Busby of Cairo, Illinois, was traveling on Route 3 to Olive Branch to pick up his wife.

About a mile south of Olive Branch on the dark, deserted road that parallels the edge of the Shawnee National Forest, Busby experienced car trouble. Grumbling his frustration, Busby got out of his car, popped open the hood.

He had not even had time to glance at the motor when he was distracted by a noise to his left. Without warning, an incredible form, over six feet tall, moved in on him and hit him in the face.

Busby and his monstrous attacker fell to the highway. Dull claws ripped at his clothing, and Busby sought desperately to hold the thing's mouth open and at arm's length so its teeth could not tear his throat.

Busby was unable to clearly identify what it was that had seized him but he said later that he could feel something fuzzy around its mouth and that the thing's body hair was as short and wiry as steel wool.

"The thing kept letting out these deep, soft growls," Busby remarked. "Those sounds were unlike anything that I had ever heard."

After what must have seemed like an eternity locked in a death struggle, a diesel truck approached with bright headlights and the roar of a powerful motor—a combination of factors that frightened Busby's attacker back into the forest.

"It was a sleek, shiny black color," Busby said, "and it ran away with heavy, thudding feet."

John Hartsworth, the truck driver, reported that the thing he had seen in his headlamps looked like some kind of "giant cat" until it had got off Busby and run into the forest on its hind legs.

In April and May of 1970, Iowa's Jackson and Clinton Counties were beset by reports of a manlike creature, six to seven feet tall, that was covered with coarse, dark-brown hair and specialized in frightening frequenters of lovers' lanes with its glowing green eyes. At the same time, farmers complained that something was killing fowl and livestock and leaving some awfully big footprints in the barnyards.

Jackson County Sheriff Robert Lyons was unimpressed by the deluge of stories about the monster that reportedly inhabited the ancient, mossy Maquoketa caves.

"As far as I'm concerned, this is nothing but a big farce!" he told the *Clinton Herald*. "Somebody just made up the story and it's built up to something pretty big, but fictional. I'm not checking it out any further at this time."

But a lot of farmers and young people continued to check out the rumors. Numerous Clinton youths claim to have spotted something gigantic and weird moving through the Wapsipinicon River bottoms.

One of this author's correspondents received an account from a couple who have a cabin on the Mississippi near Clinton. According to the man, whom we shall call Bill Fulton, he and his wife and another couple were sipping cold beers and watching television one Saturday evening after a day on the river. It was a hot July night in Iowa, so the screen door was on and the inside door was wide open.

About ten that night, the two couples heard heavy, thudding footsteps on the front porch. When they glanced toward the screen door, the frame was filled by something tall and bulky.

The women screamed and the men dropped their beer cans when the porch light illuminated a hulking monster with gorillalike features. The thing gave a kind of coughing bark, and Bill Fulton reached for the double-barreled .12-gauge shotgun above the fireplace.

"I cut loose with both barrels right through the damn screen door," Fulton told my correspondent. "The thing looked like some kind of living nightmare right out of a horror movie. It stood nearly seven feet tall and it must have weighed 500 pounds. It had a chest that just wouldn't stop. I sure as hell didn't want that thing in my living room!"

The Fultons and their guests ran to the porch and watched the screaming monster plow into the forest.

"I was too excited to grab fresh shells," Fulton said. "We found drops of blood on the porch. Of course, I couldn't have missed it, firing at it point-blank the way I did.

"Later, an old trapper told me that animal hide is tough, especially if it has a covering of thickly matted hair. That light bird shot I had in the shotgun probably only stung the beast and scared the hell out of it.

"God, though, I guess we are lucky it got more scared than mad. If it would have come through that screen door, it would have mauled us into hamburger. None of us slept that night. We took turns on guard duty."

In a recent article in *Fate* magazine, author Loren Coleman told of a monster sighted in the Kickapoo Creek (Illinois) area that was as large as a cow and walked upright.

On August 11, 1970, three young men who were hiking about two miles northeast of Waynesville, half a mile from Kickapoo Creek, saw the monster standing atop a cliff. They later described the thing as between seven and eight feet tall, slightly hunched over, but not in the manner of an ape. They noticed that its arms were proportionately as long as a man's.

On August 16th, two construction workers with the Arcole Midwest Corporation were traveling on Route 136 approaching the Kickapoo Creek Bridge north of Waynesville when they claimed to have encountered "a tall man

or maybe a bear or a gorilla." The men described the thing as standing about six and a half feet tall with brown hair and stooped shoulders.

In the October–November 1970 issue of *National Wildlife,* managing editor George Harrison reported his first-person sighting of Sasquatch tracks while on the American Yeti Expedition led by Robert W. Morgan and cosponsored by the official publication of the National Wildlife Federation. Harrison tells how he was able to place his own 10 and one half B foot next to the six-inch-wide track of what must have been Bigfoot, the Sasquatch. Whatever had made the naked footprint, Harrison knew, weighed far more than his 170 pounds, for it had sunk more than an inch into the earth near a stream.

Harrison quotes Ed McLarney, a United Press International wire service stringer in Stevenson, Washington, as admitting that by training he was dubious about Bigfoot reports, but ". . . after seeing the tracks and hearing the stories from people who have seen Bigfoot, I'm 90 percent sure that something exists which is beyond my own experience."

Harrison himself confesses to being "—85 percent" certain of Bigfoot's existence after returning from the expedition.

"One thing is sure," he concludes, "reputable scientists agree there is no biological reason why Bigfoot cannot exist. In view of increasing evidence and the abundance of tracks and sightings, it now seems appropriate . . . to face up to the next obvious question in the Bigfoot investigation: Should a leading scientific group, perhaps with the aid of the Federal government, now take up the search?"

But the mystery may be two-pronged. Are there some as yet unidentified apelike creatures prowling about our remote, forested regions, or is our plane of reality being regularly invaded by bizarre and hideous ghost monsters from other dimensions?

THE PRIEST WHO ANGERED A PRANK-PLAYING GHOST

"There it is again," Eric Moulton groaned, indicating the loud scratching noise that had begun in their attic. "The blasted ghost is having his jollies."

Mrs. Moulton winced as a heavy trunk was slammed on the floor above her. "I wish he could be a bit quieter, love," she sighed. "But at least he never stays at it too long."

Eighteen-year-old Michael, Moulton's stepson, walked into the living room where his parents sat attempting to watch a program on television above the noise of the thumping, bumping ghost in the attic.

"The bloody thing is at it again, is it?" he shrugged, seating himself before the set. "What's on the telly tonight?"

The Eric Moulton home in Middleton, England, had been plagued by their noisy ghost for several years. The thing always began by scratching about in the attic like some wild beast, then it slammed an occasional door, sometimes moved down into the Moultons' living quarters to shove a few pieces of furniture around. The Moultons had learned to live with their pesky spook, until that night in mid-January 1968, when Mr. Moulton put forth a proposition that had recently occurred to him.

"I'm thinking of seeing Father Murphy and seeing if he won't come and exorcise the bloody thing!" he said.

"What's that?" his wife Dorothy asked; his last few words had been swatted away from her ears by the sound of something banging to the floor in the attic directly above her. "You want to have Father Murphy for supper?"

"No," Moulton began again, "I'm thinking of having Father Murphy come to exorcise the bloody spook!"

"You mean say prayers for its restless soul and send it on its way?" Dorothy wondered.

"That's right," Moulton answered resolutely.

"Whatever you think best, love," she told him, then turned her attention back to the television program.

Moulton may have thought at the time that he had made a wise and proper decision, but to his great regret, his determination to have their attic spook exorcised turned out to be the worst decision he could have reached.

The Reverend Frank Murphy of St. Mary's Church in Middleton came to their home on January 20, 1968, prepared to "lay" the ghost to rest. Father Murphy performed the rites of exorcism, told the Moultons not to worry about their rambunctious spirit any longer.

"Well, my dear," Moulton told his wife that night as they prepared to go to bed, "that should be that. Our playful spook has been sent packing."

"Good lord, then," Dorothy shouted, pointing toward the doorway. "What is that!"

A misty black form hovered in the doorway of the bedroom, then drifted up to the attic.

That night, instead of the scratching and the tapping, the Moultons were bombarded with great bangings around the walls and what appeared to be the sound of heavy feet stomping throughout their three-bedroom, two-story home.

"Oh, oh, my pet," Moulton sighed, as he lay next to his wife in their double bed. "You don't suppose we've angered the thing by calling in the priest, do you?"

When Dorothy Moulton returned from an errand that next day, she found that all the clothes in her bedroom closet had been pulled out and thrown around the room.

"Can't be the spook," her husband argued. "He's never done anything mean before."

But on the following days, the Moultons found their dresser drawers ripped out and their contents strewn about the floor. Their beds were pulled apart, and it became impossible to keep their clothes in the closets.

"Must be someone playing a mean joke on us," Moulton said, stubbornly defending the ghost. "I mean, the spook has always stayed with scratching and knocking."

"That's true," Michael said, "but that was before you decided to call in the priest to chase the ghost out of the attic!"

"But see here now," Moulton said, producing several thick rolls of tape from a paper sack. "Today before we go out, I'm going to tape up every window in the house with this tough stickum. That way, even if the tape doesn't keep the cruel jokesters out of the house, we'll be able to at least prove to ourselves whether or not it is the ghost doing all these nasty things."

When the Moultons returned that night, they found several rooms in their house completely upset with clothing, furniture, and eating utensils dumped on the floor. Not a single inch of the yards of tape across the windows had been disturbed.

Carolyn Fleetham, a twenty-year-old typist who rented a home from the Moultons for a time, remembered seeing an apparition outside the bathroom door.

"It was a white misty shape," she said, "and it looked like a disconnected head to me! I was just coming out of the bathroom when I saw it.

"I never believed in ghosts," she added, "but now I'm not so sure."

Miss Fleetham's belief did, however, grow to the extent where she moved out of the Moultons' home.

Michael nearly left the family nest because of the ghost, but he decided not to desert his mother and stepfather.

"It's getting me down, though," he said at the time.

"I've never actually seen the ghost, but the sounds the blasted thing makes are bad enough.

"It's especially bad at night when we're trying to settle down to rest," he emphasised. "I can hear the noise of the thing scratching away, and then there are the footsteps that clomp around all night."

Moulton acknowledged that the haunting was not quite so bad on him because he was at work all day.

"But I'm terribly worried over the effect the spook is having on Dorothy," he said. "That thing keeps pounding away all night and we can't get a decent sleep. I'm afraid Dorothy is facing a nervous breakdown over the bloody ghost."

Father Murphy expressed his concern that his blessing of the ghost had had such a negative and violent effect on the paranormal prankster.

"I'm truly sorry that things have become worse for the Moultons," the clergyman was quoted as saying. "But I assure you that it is not normal for such things to happen after a blessing. The Moultons are good, simple folk, and I fully believe all that they have told me about the manifestations in their home."

Another who researched the phenomena and came away a believer in the manifestations was John Daly of the Psychic Research Society of Manchester. Daly testified that he had spent a night in the Moulton residence, and he said that he, too, had heard the same ghostly noises. Daly quickly qualified his remarks by stating that he had first investigated for any evidence that the Moultons might have been faking the dramatic displays of their ghostly lodger.

"We always check for any possible form of fraud in cases such as these," he said, "but this business at the Moulton home seems a genuine ghost to me. The haunting is quite extraordinary really, and we can find no cause for the happenings."

Extensive research could produce no reason why the Moultons should have been so afflicted by a reckless denizen from another dimension. The house itself had been built in 1955 as a farmhouse. The farmer who had worked the land died in 1963. There is no evidence to support the contention that the spirit of the farmer might be attempting to reclaim his home from a living family.

Although the violent eye of the psychic storm in the Moulton house eventually spent its preternatural energy and was reabsorbed into the cosmos, the Eric Moulton family of Middleton, England, would always be able to tell a convincing tale to even the most skeptical audience that they had indeed had a strange encounter with a ghost.

A TERRIBLE TALE OF A BOUNCING HEAD

In the year 1859, so the story goes, there was a deserted house on Vine Street in Cincinnati, Ohio, that had become the center of local excitement due to several reports of strange noises and phantoms which had been filed by sober and responsible residents of the area.

As usually happens in such cases, the phenomenon began to attract large crowds of people who hoped to catch a glimpse of a real ghost. According to numerous witnesses, several of the local bully boys had on more than one evening sought to force open the front door by their united weight and strength. According to observers, the men were always hurled off the front steps by some invisible agency, and after they had picked themselves up, many of them severely injured, they would stand open-mouthed as the door would swing open of its own volition to permit some ghostly guest to enter or to exit.

The vacant dwelling was known as the old Roscoe place, because of the last family who had lived there, and who had, one by one, disappeared without a trace. The last living Roscoe was the old grandmother, and it was rumored that she had poisoned her kin methodically and purposefully over the years. Although the accusations of foul play were frequently repeated, none of the charges were ever authenticated.

It was one day when the tales of haunting at the Roscoe house were at their peak that Henry Saylor of the Cincinnati *Commercial* was ordered by his editor to spend a night in the eerie place.

"And I mean that I want you to spend the night there all alone," the editor emphasised. "I want you to see for yourself if the Roscoe place really is haunted. If anything happens to you during the night, give me a nice two-column story."

Saylor did not feel like looking for employment elsewhere, so he shrugged his shoulders and obeyed his editor's assignment.

"Better you than me, Henry old boy," one of his friends on the paper said when he learned of Saylor's assignment for that evening. Saylor had a reputation for being an iron-nerved journalist, and even the gang in the composing room had confidence that Henry could pass the night in the Old Roscoe place without having his hair turn white.

Saylor notified the police that he would be in the house—no use being arrested as a prowler—then he made an entrance through a rear window just before dark.

The place looked peaceful enough in the twilight.

The rooms were deserted, devoid of furniture. He did manage to find a dusty old sofa which he dragged into the parlor from another room, then he sat back to await the gathering darkness.

"Hey, you old spooks, come on out and fight!"

The shout came from outside, and Saylor cautiously peeped out one of the windows.

A husky laborer, who had quite obviously patronized a local saloon not many minutes before, stood crowing his bravery from the sidewalk outside. The reporter fought back the temptation to emit a dreadful wailing to test the laborer's true courage.

It was not long before there was a rather large number of men and women collecting in front of the old house. Now and then someone would pass by and shout his disbelief in such things as ghosts; but generally the crowd had all imbibed quite heavily before they made their appearance before the Roscoe place, and they stood milling about,

mumbling ribaldry and references to their personal bravery in confronting ghosts.

No one, of course, knew of the newsman who sat inside the darkened spook house, listening to their shouts and their laughter. Saylor was becoming desperate for a cigar, but he knew that he dare not strike a flame for fear of causing panic among the crowd outside. Then, too, it occurred to him that some of the bully boys might decide to have a bit of rough sport with him if he should in any way betray his presence.

And, besides, he mused to himself, I was sent here to do a job of reporting. If there really are such things as ghosts materializing here, I do not wish to do anything that would in any way alter the customary conditions under which the manifestations are said to appear.

The house was now quite dark, and Saylor had only faint illumination from the streetlights outside by which he might observe any movement within the place.

"Hey," someone shouted from the crowd outside, "here comes one of 'em now!"

Saylor had heard it said that one could actually observe ghostly forms entering and leaving the Roscoe house. Anyone who attempted to intercept any of the eerie images would be swept aside, as if by a cold wind.

The journalist hurried to the window to see for himself. He saw the clear and solid image of a man walking rapidly across the lawn toward the house. None of the local bully boys made any kind of move to intercept the figure as it ascended the steps.

Saylor heard a noise as of the opening and closing of the front door. The journalist knew that all outside doors were securely locked and bolted. Heavy footsteps pounded up the stairs, proceeded to the chamber above his head.

"That's no ghost," he said aloud to himself, "but just who is it and how will he take to me?"

Saylor had not entered the old Roscoe place completely dependent on his cool nerves. He drew his pistol and groped his way up the stairs to the chamber where the man was loudly pacing the uncarpeted floor.

When he pushed open the door to the room, he was startled to find that the chamber was completely empty.

But the footsteps were now thudding loudly from an adjoining room.

Saylor quickly entered that room, his pistol at the ready; but the moment he introduced his presence, he was once again left alone with the darkness and the silence.

It was just as he was turning to leave the room that he struck his foot against some object on the floor.

He knelt, his eyes trying to focus on the form in the dim light. He passed his hands over its surface.

It was a human head. The head of a woman.

Saylor hoisted the head by its hair, returned with it to the room below where more plentiful illumination would make an examination easier. If any of the boys in the office and the composing room could have seen the reporter walking down the stairs with the woman's head in his hand, they would certainly have seen that their confidence in his nerve was fully justified.

As he stood by the window attentively examining the severed head, he heard the outer door opening and closing in rapid succession. The sounds of what seemed to be dozens of pairs of feet came thudding up the stairs to the room in which he stood with the head. Within seconds, Saylor found himself the center of attention in a crowd of men and women.

Good lord, the reporter thought to himself. The bully boys and their ladies have finally pushed open the front door, and here I stand with a head in my hands.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Saylor began, trying his best to maintain his cool and confident manner, "I realize that you have discovered me in what would appear to be very suspicious circumstances, but . . ."

The crowd interrupted his explanation with raucous howls of laughter, such laughter as the journalist had only heard once before—when he had been assigned to do a story on the state's largest insane asylum. The laughing men and women began to point at the head in his hand, as if he held aloft some vastly amusing trophy.

Momentarily confused and noticing for the first time that the men and women who surrounded him were not really as solid-looking as they had at first appeared, Saylor dropped the head and it went rolling amongst the feet of the insanely laughing crowd.

Then, to the reporter's amazement, the men and women began to dance around the head as if it were a great tribal totem. The gestures of the dance became grotesque, obscene, of a meaning that seemed atavistic and savage. The dancers began to kick at the head. Again and again a foot would suddenly strike out from the dancing throng and send the head reeling and spinning like a bizarre top.

Soon the dance was forgotten, and everyone's attention was focused upon kicking the wretched head about the room. Men and women cursed and screamed as they swung their feet at the battered head.

The head now seemed to come alive, and it bounded about the room as if in terror, seeking an escape. At last it managed to roll out the door into the hallway. With screams like the baying of a pack of hounds on the scent, the crowd followed the bouncing head out into the hall.

The instant the door closed behind them, Saylor was once again completely alone in the darkness and silence of the old Roscoe place.

He put away his pistol, went to a window and saw the dim beginnings of dawnlight. The streets were deserted.

When he got back to the office of the *Commercial,* he found the city editor asleep over his desk. Saylor shook his shoulder gently, rousing the snoring man.

At last the editor managed to peel open bleary eyes. Then, focusing on Saylor, he became at once wide awake.

"Good God, man!" he snorted. "You look ghastly. How did things go at the old Roscoe house? Some boys stopped by earlier in the evening and said things seemed quiet as a grave."

Saylor took a deep puff of the cigar before he answered his editor's query.

"Well," he said calmly, "I spent the night there, and as the boys told you, things were quiet."

"Nothing at all happened?" the editor wanted to know.

"Nothing," Saylor said softly. "Nothing whatever." *

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* (Adapted and retold from an earlier account by Ambrose Bierce)

CAN MEDIUMS SPEAK TO THE DEAD?

When the late Bishop James Pike's alleged communication with his dead son was published in the clergyman's book *The Other Side,* one reviewer declared it "a convincing and disturbing account . . . the surprised, skeptical report of a man seeking rational explanation for extraordinary phenomena that he confronted." Yet another reviewer said it was "nothing more than a loving father's wish fulfillment."

Interest in what lies beyond the death experience is ageless. At the time of his death, it is said that Thomas Edison was working on an instrument that he hoped would pick up messages from the spirit world and translate them into sound. Edison believed man to be composed of billions of highly charged entities that live in the cells. At physical death, these entities, according to the inventor, take themselves elsewhere and go on functioning in some other form of environment.

Those people who claim to be able to communicate with the physically dead are known as mediums, and a good many mediums are affiliated with the Spiritualist church. Dr. D. J. West, a psychical researcher, recently wrote critically of Spiritualists and said that Spiritualism thrived on simple souls.

Dr. West stated that middle-aged women make up the bulk of the audience at a Spiritualist service and that the medium does little more than pour out a stream of verbiage about vibrations of harmony and astral bodies. In Dr. West's opinion, nothing could be more pathetic or boring.

Reverend Arthur Ford served as the medium during the famous televised seance in Toronto when Bishop Pike seemed to establish communication with his deceased son. Until his recent death, Rev. Ford was a minister of the Disciples of Christ Church, and he often pointed out to his critics and his orthodox colleagues that the promise of eternal life is the central tenet of the Christian faith. Why then, he would ask, should one reject what appears to be evidence of the validity of this promise?

It was "Fletcher," Rev. Ford's spirit control, who brought forth Bishop Pike's son and other communicating personalities who were familiar to the clergyman. Fletcher was supposedly a deceased French-Canadian boyhood friend of Rev. Ford.

Bishop Pike said that he did not see how any research done by Rev. Ford could have brought about such intimate details of his life and the roles that certain individuals had played in shaping his thinking.

Not long before his death, Rev. Ford complained in an address to a conference of religious mediums that the medium had served as a guinea pig for investigators long enough. In his opinion, the phenomenon of mediumship should be considered a means to an end, and the end should be spiritual understanding and a way to serve our fellowman in a better way.

Dr. Joseph B. Rhine, former head of parapsychology at Duke University, has stated that he is convinced that the laboratory has satisfactorily demonstrated that the human personality is something more than its physical components.

Dr. Karlis Osis, current director of research for the American Society of Psychical Research, has observed that there is undeniable greatness in defeating polio and other diseases, and there is greatness in conquering outer space. But, he asks, "Is it not at least equally important to know the certain answer to such a basic question of human existence: What happens when a man dies?"

THE GHOST THAT SMOTHERED A CHILD

In May 1955, on the first weekend which the Frank Pell family spent in their new home on Coxwell Road in Birmingham, England, they were awakened by the sound of a slamming door. Frank Pell got out of bed to investigate, puzzled because he knew that he had carefully locked all the doors before retiring that evening.

As he stood in the kitchen, he heard a scraping sound like the noise of a scrambling animal. After that the house was silent, and Frank Pell returned to bed.

As time passed, the Pells were visited nightly by an array of strange sounds. The greatest concentration of noises occurred about midnight, and no matter how the doors had been secured, they banged to-and-fro, as if they had a will of their own. Eerie whispers of half-words and nearly understandable phrases echoed in the air around the Pells.

Both Frank Pell and his wife knew that such things could have no natural explanation, and they lay awake nights, listening and wondering. Their dream house had begun transforming itself into a nightmare.

Once while cleaning the bedroom, Mrs. Pell felt a cold draft and what she described as "icy, intangible fingers" running over her body.

Even though the sense of evil had clearly presented itself to the Pells, both were sure that fear of it would only give it greater power over them. They reasoned that only those who feared supernatural forces could be harmed by them.

Then one hot June morning, the family awakened to find that their baby had suffocated during the night. The child had been in the best of health and no mark of violence appeared on its body.

Shortly after the child's burial, one of their sons startled them by asking if the baby had gone with the little white dog. The Pells knew that no dog had ever entered the house and they asked their son when he had last seen the white dog.

"On the night the baby left us," the boy replied. "The dog was sitting on the baby's face."

Mrs. Pell became hysterical, and Frank could not calm her. The thought that her baby had died from supernatural suffocation horrified her. Although they summoned a priest to exorcise the spirits of the house, the bumping and banging continued with even greater regularity.

Then, on one of the first days of July, Frank Pell suddenly became conscious of foreboding whispers of greater volume than he had ever heard. The suggestion of evil became so strong that he feared for his wife.

He rushed to the stairs where a frightening scene awaited him. His wife stood on the landing, transfixed with terror. Her limbs had stiffened and her hands clutched frantically at her side. The veins along her neck had swollen. Her eyes bulged with terror and her mouth gaped open in a silent scream.

When Pell ran up the stairs to help her, he ran directly into an invisible force that would not let him pass. It seemed to shroud him like net until he at last broke through the wall of evil with a powerful lunge. At that instant, his wife's screams filled the house.

Without bothering to pack, the Pells took their children and left the house. Later, friends of the Pells collected their belongings. They, too, heard the strange whispers and the weird thumpings, and once they finished packing, no inducement could bring them back into the house.

THE HAUNTED ROOM THAT SWALLOWED A JUDGE

The "Spook House" was the appellation that had been given to the deserted plantation that sprawled along the road leading north from Manchester in eastern Kentucky. Most of the buildings on the once elegant plantation were burned in 1863 by some stragglers from the retreating column of General George W. Morgan when he was driven from the Cumberland Gap by General Kirby Smith.

As inhabitants of the area gathered the next morning to poke about the smoldering ruins, a great deal of speculation was given to the subject of whether or not the fire had purged the "Spook House" of its evil spirits. And as the children searched the ashes for shiny trinkets that might have endured the flames, anxious mothers warned them to watch out for any object that might be tainted with the stain of the haunting that had infected the plantation for five years.

It was on a night in 1858 that our story begins. During one evening, the owner of the plantation, together with his wife, three daughters, a son, and a baby, completely and inexplicably disappeared. When friends investigated, they found that not one thread of their clothing nor one stick of their household goods had been taken or disturbed. The seven members of the family had simply and totally disappeared.

The fields soon became overgrown with brambles. The Negro slaves who chose to remain temporarily in the area, along with poor white farmworkers, began to strip the wooden outbuildings and the slat fences for fuel.

Although the deserted plantation was openly pillaged by daylight, no one other than a stranger would even approach it by night. Any spot on this earth where seven people could vanish without a trace during the night was not, the local inhabitants reasoned, a place to be frequented after the sun had gone down.

But one stormy night in June 1859, two men had no choice other than to seek refuge in the "Spook House."

Col. J. C. McArdle, a lawyer, and Judge Myron Veigh, were residents of Frankfort, Kentucky, and they knew nothing of the plantation and its infamous reputation. But these two men of the courts would soon learn the truth in that old judicial maxim they had often repeated about ignorance of the existing laws of an area being no acceptable plea for the transgressor.

Col. McArdle and Judge Veigh had deemed their business so important that they had decided to push on in their journey from Booneville to Manchester in spite of the obvious signs of an approaching storm. Violent winds, rain, and lightning broke upon them just as they pulled opposite the "Spook House," and the men made an instant decision to seek shelter in the large house from which they could see light issuing.

Col. McArdle said later that the flashes of lightning were coming so rapidly in such firey succession that they had no trouble finding their way through the plantation gateway and into a shed. Here they hitched and unharnessed their team of horses, then pulled their hats as low as possible and their coat collars as high as possible and made a run for the big house.

The two men pounded on the front door, but elicited no response.

"They can't hear us above the storm!" Judge Veigh shouted.

"I'm getting soaked to the skin!" Col. McArdle replied. "Let's push in the door and apologize later."

The front door would not yield; but at last, the two men found a side door that surrendered to their combined weight and strength.

The instant they entered the house, they found themselves in darkness and silence.

Col. McArdle later remarked that he believed at first that he had been killed by a stroke of lightning the moment he crossed the threshold; then proving himself to be alive, he feared that he had been suddenly struck deaf and blind. Not the briefest flash of lightning found its way through the windows of the plantation house. Not the slightest rumble of thunder, the faintest howl of wind, the least beating of rain could be heard within its walls.

When Col. McArdle had somewhat recovered from the dazing effect of the sudden transition from violent uproar to complete silence, he groped about in the dark for the door handle, determined to step back out into the storm to test whether or not he had, indeed, been deprived of sight and hearing. He turned what he believed to be the doorknob that would lead them back outside. Instead, he found that he had opened a portal leading to another room.

We may read the record of what Col. McArdle and Judge Veigh saw in that room in the transcription of the colonel's own words from the Frankfort *Advocate* of August 6, 1876:

"This apartment was suffused with a faint greenish light, the source of which I could not determine, though nothing was sharply defined . . .

"The only objects within the blank stone walls of that room were human corpses. In number they were perhaps eight or ten—it may well be understood that I did not truly count them.

"They were of different ages, or rather sizes, from infancy up, and of both sexes. All were prostrate on the floor, excepting one, apparently a young woman, who sat up, her back supported by an angle of the wall. A babe was clasped in the arms of another and older woman. A half-grown lad lay face downward across the legs of a full-bearded man. One or two were nearly naked, and the hand of a young girl held the fragment of a gown which

she had torn open at the breast. The bodies were in various stages of decay, all greatly shrunken in face and figure. Some were but little more than skeletons.

"While I stood stupefied with horror by this ghastly spectacle and still holding open the door, by some unaccountable perversity my attention was diverted from the shocking scene and concerned itself with trifles and details. Perhaps my mind, with an instinct of self-preservation, sought relief in matters which would relax its dangerous tension.

"Among other things, I observed that the door that I was holding open was of heavy iron plates, riveted . . . I turned the knob and (three strong bolts) were retracted with the edge; released it, and they shot out. It was a spring lock. On the inside there was no knob, nor any kind of projection—a smooth surface of iron."

While Col. McArdle was observing the fact that the door could not possibly be opened from the inside of the room, he felt himself being thrust aside by Judge Veigh, whom he had altogether forgotten in the intensity of his own feelings.

"For God's sake," the colonel shouted at his friend. "Do not go in there! Let us leave this dreadful place at once!"

"He gave no heed to my entreaties, but (as fearless a gentleman as lived in all the South) walked quickly to the center of the room, knelt beside one of the bodies for a closer examination and tenderly raised its blackened and shriveled head in his hands," continues Col. McArdle's account in the *Advocate*. "A strong disagreeable odor came through the doorway, completely overpowering me.

"My senses reeled; I felt myself falling, and in clutching at the edge of the door for support, pushed it shut with a sharp click!"

The colonel knew no more until he recovered his reason six weeks later in a hotel at Manchester, where he had been taken by travelers who had found him on the road the next morning. For all those weeks, Col. McArdle had suffered from a nervous fever and a constant delirium.

"I had been found lying in the road several miles away from the house," he stated, "but how I had escaped from it to get there I never knew. On recovery, or as soon as my physicians permitted me to talk, I inquired about the fate of Judge Veigh, whom (to quiet me, as I now know) they represented as well and at home.

"No one believed a word of my story, and who can wonder? And who can imagine my grief when, arriving at my home in Frankfort two months later, I learned that Judge Veigh had never been heard of since that night?

"With all that afterward occurred—the examination of the house; the failure to find any room corresponding to that which I have described; the attempt to have me adjudged insane, and my triumph over my accusers—the readers of the *Advocate* are familiar.

"After all these years I am still confident that excavations which I have neither the legal right to undertake nor the wealth to make would disclose the secret of the disappearance of my unhappy friend, and possibly of the former occupants and owners of the deserted and now destroyed house.

"I do not despair of yet bringing about such a search, and it is a source of deep grief to me that it has been delayed by the undeserved hostility and unwise incredulity of the family and friends of the late Judge Veigh."

Colonel McArdle died in Frankfort on December 13, 1879. Perhaps he was able to solve the bizarre mystery of the room that swallowed a judge when he, himself, reached the Other Side.

THE MYSTERY OF SPOOKLIGHTS

A notorious ghostlight is located in the tri-state area of Spooksville, in a corner of Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. Spooksville's ghostlight is so dependable that it is advertised as a tourist attraction, and it annually brings in hordes of curious tourists.

In appearance, the Spooksville ghostlight resembles a bright lantern. On many occasions the light dims before spectators, then bounces back in a brilliant blaze of light. Hundreds of first-hand encounters with the mysterious ghostlight are on record. These accounts demonstrate actual experiences with the unknown, sometimes frightening, but always interesting.

During World War II, the U.S. Corps of Engineers scoured the entire area, using the latest scientific equipment. For weeks they tested caves, mineral deposits, highway routes, exhausting every possible explanation for the origin of the mystery lights. They finally left, confounded.

In *Spooksville's Ghostlights,* a small pamphlet written and printed by Bob Loftin, such accounts as the two following reports are included:

According to Louise Graham, a spooklight perched on the rear window of a bus returning from a school carnival at Quapaw, Oklahoma. Everyone in the bus was convinced that the spooklight was attempting to enter the school bus and everyone was thoroughly frightened.

"The light was so bright," Louise Graham said, "that it temporarily blinded the bus driver and he had to stop the bus. Just as we stopped, the light went away."

Chester McMinn of Quapaw told of the night when he was plowing after dark because it was so intolerably hot during the day. "Seems the old light felt real neighborly one night and decided to help me with my plowing. I couldn't see too well, and I guess the old light sensed it, because he started hovering all over the field where I was plowing."

McMinn appreciated the spooklight's actions until it suddenly darted in his direction. The farmer says that he "absolutely froze stiff" to his tractor until the light drifted out of sight.

On February 24, 1965, Rob Gibbons, a Drury College (Springfield, Missouri) senior, presented his theories about the spooklight that appears each night on a lonely country road near Joplin, Missouri. Totally embracing the scientific method, Gibbons registered impatience with the tales of ghosts, goblins, and long-dead Indian spirits, and at a special student symposium, he supported his suppositions with movies and slides which he and a colleague had been gathering since 1960.

Gibbons was careful to point out that his explanation pertained only to the present spooklight area, which is along a dirt road some eleven miles southwest of Joplin, near the Missouri-Oklahoma line. The light, according to the thousands who have witnessed its appearance, is seen almost every night from a half-hour after sunset to a half-hour before sunrise. It varies in intensity and time of appearance, and sometimes breaks up into distinct pairs.

Gibbons detailed the basic problem that presents itself to every researcher of the unknown: separating accurate reports from distorted accounts and deliberate lies.

For instance, one man reported that he had seen the spooklight set a haystack on fire.

Several accounts maintained that the light had entered

the interior of an automobile, in one instance, burning the upholstery.

Another witness told of seeing an old lady walking down the roadside with the spooklight where her head should have been.

Gibbons, the cautious researcher, stated that he had never seen anything more dramatic than a spot of light bobbing about at the end of the gravel road.

"Usually it seems to float just above the hills down the roadway to the west," Gibbons remarked. "At rare times it seems to come toward the observer. At times it moves slightly horizontally. With a 30-power telescope, I rendered the ocular determination of the light's maneuvers more perceptible. Through the telescope, I could perceive as many as four distinct pairs of lights, with pairs of red lights appearing slightly to the right of pairs of bright white lights. The red lights grew dimmer as the white lights became brighter."

The Drury College senior put together a composite map of the area. He found that U.S. 66, running east and west from Commerce to Quapaw, Oklahoma, was in direct line with the spooklight road and the observation point. He also noticed that Spring River was between the point of observation and distant Highway 66, twelve miles away.

"Therefore," Gibbons concluded, "I believe the cause of the spooklight lies in the refraction of the light from automobiles moving on distant U.S. 66 in direct line with the road where the spooklight is observed. Light from a source traveling on 66 would be bent, or refracted, out of its normal path and would appear in the form of bouncing balls of fire on the road twelve miles away. The phenomenon of the bright white lights appearing slightly to the left of the dimmer red lights corresponds with the natural movement of traffic on a road or a highway."

In other words, in student investigator Gibbons' studied opinion, the Spooksville light is caused by the refraction of the light produced by headlamps and taillights on U.S. 66 twelve miles away from the area where the spooklight is reported. And he makes a good case for this theory—except that the spooklight was seen in the area as early as

1903, and that was long before the automobiles streamed along Route 66.

L. W. Robertson, Curator of the Spooksville Museum, has been quoted as stating: "I have no idea what the spooklight is, and I've looked at it as much as any living man. I don't tell the tourists any story about the light at all. If they don't believe it, it's here for them to see for themselves. I accompanied the U.S. Army Engineers on their experiments to explain the light in 1946. Maybe the old Indian and Civil War legends about the source of the light are just as plausible as the scientific theories."

There are numerous "spooklights" haunting the nooks and crannies, mountain peaks and valleys of this planet. And so far, all attempts at scientific explanation of their source or origin have been unsuccessful.

Experts have tried to explain the phenomena away by using the existing structure of orthodox physics. Perhaps, if we are ever to truly understand these mysterious "spooklights," it will be necessary to go outside the existing scientific framework to find the answers, for there seem to be strange ghostlights that cannot be said to be within the realm of any extant physics. There are lights that seem to shine directly from a world that transcends the material plane.

Bill Mack recounted his investigation of the mystery light of Bahie Kino, a Mexican Gulf of California resort, for the June 1970 issue of *Fate* magazine. Mack reports that his first introduction to the *luz peculiar* came when a strange bluish light coming through the windows of his camper trailer awakened him one night about 10:00 P.M.

"It appeared to be about fifty yards long," Mack writes, "and I estimated its phosphorescence extended about twenty-five feet in the air. There it sat, just a blob of blue light!"

The author-fisherman explored the area as thoroughly as possible and found no clue as to the source of the mysterious light.

From a local fisherman he learned that the light had been seen for years and had been greatly feared by the primitive Seri Indians. Mack also discovered that an informal research team from the University of Arizona had spent three days in the area, probing, digging, and testing with an assortment of instruments. Their unofficial conclusion was that the *luz peculiar* resulted from the ionization of the air which occurs only under specific atmospheric conditions.

But like every other investigator who has been led to research the Mexican mystery light, they could offer no explanation why the luminescence only appears in the *one* spot.

Mack made two additional trips to Kino to check further on the *luz peculiar*. Both journeys were unsuccessful because the light failed to materialize.

On his third trip, approximately a month later, Mack watched the light begin to glow at about 11:00 P.M. on a quiet, sultry night. The mystery light remained visible for nearly two hours on that night, and Mack made use of the time to make several tours around it.

"I had reasoned that if the ionization theory was correct and if the light appeared only in that spot something large and metallic might be the collecting agent," Mack writes. "Secretly I had hoped to find a meteor, although the ground surface showed absolutely no indication of ever having been disturbed. But, like everyone else's, my efforts were doomed to failure. Neither the compass nor the metal detector were affected in any way by the ghostly glow."

Mack did manage to capture several exposures of the mystery light with his twin lens Yashica-Mat camera, which produced pictures of "extremely poor quality . . . the light showed as a tiny glow in the center of . . . intense black."

The author concludes his article with a common plaint voiced by so many investigators of mystery lights: "Maybe the Seri Indians are right and the light is a spirit. From what I've been able to find out, they have just as much evidence as any of us other investigators."

THE SOUND OF PHANTOM OARSMEN

As a reporter of the strange and the unknown, I am always appreciative of accounts of strange encounters with ghosts that are passed on to me by those who have read my books and magazine articles. Here is one such account with the names altered to protect the individuals' right to privacy.

Mary was ten years old at the time of the incident, and she was 63 at the time of her telling the tale, but as she remarked, "There are some experiences that a body just doesn't forget."

Mary and her family were sitting about the fire one bitter winter night, and her mother began to talk of William, the oldest son, who had gone with the fishing fleets. "It has been so long since we heard from him," the mother complained.

"You know how fishermen are about writing," the younger brother said, trying to make light of her maternal concern.

But that night at their prayers, the anxious mother insisted that they had a special *Pater* for William.

Later, Mary remembers being awakened by her mother, who said that she heard the sounds of oars moving upon the ocean. Since the family lived in a seacoast fishing village, they could not understand why these oars should be of special concern to Mother.

"At her insistence," Mary recalled, "I opened the window and listened to the sounds of the oars dipping into the sea. I also heard the unmistakable sound of male voices, but I could not make out what was being said."

"Maybe they're in some kind of trouble," Mother remarked. "Mary, light a lantern and hang it outside. Let us do what we can to guide those poor men to shore."

Mary did as she was bade, but she could see no boat offshore, and no knock came to their door that night from fishermen seeking shelter.

The next day, Mother made inquiries of coast guardsmen regarding the possibility of any lost boats, but all replies were negative.

"Mother returned to the house pale and drawn," Mary said. "She seemed to sense some significance in the sound of the oarsmen that escaped the rest of us."

The evening meal was not made easier when Peter, the younger brother, complained of his sisters' careless handling of fresh meat.

"Look!" he growled. "Someone has sprinkled blood on the back of my hand."

Since no fresh meat had been prepared that evening, Mother regarded the mysterious appearance of the droplets of blood to be a grim omen concerning the fate of William.

"That night," Mary remembered, "we had no sooner shut out the lights when we heard the splash of oars, two and two alternately striking the water. I got up as I had the night before, the lantern in my hand.

"I stood on the beach and saw nothing but a clear stretch of ocean. No boat was to be seen, yet the 'plish-plish' of oars sounded on as monotonously and distinctly as the regular tick of a metronome.

"Peter joined me on the beach, but his more experienced eyes could no more sight a boat than could my own."

When the two rejoined their mother and younger sister in the seaside cottage, Peter, in answer to Mother's question, replied that perhaps she was correct. Maybe they were receiving a "fisherman's warning" about William.

"Two nights later when the fishing fleet returned," Mary said, "we were given the sad news over the canvas-wrapped corpse of our older brother. On the evening in which we had first heard the sound of the phantom oarsmen, William had slipped over the side of the boat and had drowned in heavy waves before he could be rescued."

GHOSTS OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Wanda Sue Parrott is a newswoman with a talented nose for sniffing out good tales of the paranormal. In the "California Living" section of the Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner* for October 13, 1968, she related a number of ghostly accounts of eerie things that go bump in the night in southern California.

A 44-year-old machinist and part-time artist, who is employed on the swing shift at a factory in the San Fernando Valley, claims the ability to see entities who no longer reside in fleshly bodies.

"I often see figures appear in the shop late at night," he told Miss Parrott.

The machinist-artist, who preferred to be identified only as C.C.G., said that the figures he saw materialize were dressed in frontier style clothing and seemed to be gathered about a campsite. "They go about their business as if they are totally unaware of my presence," he stated.

C.C.G. has the feeling that the ghosts might be those of pioneers who were massacred on the spot where the factory now stands.

One night he decided to take a chance on making a fool of himself, and he asked the foreman if he had ever seen anyone other than the regular crew at the shop. Instead of pressing C.C.G. for an explanation of what he meant and then laughing at him when he explained, the foreman replied: "So you've seen them, too?"

Miss Parrott writes that both men agree in the belief that ". . . our scientists have a lot to learn about the coexistence of time, space and other planes of life."

Terry Winckler of Orange County told the newswoman about the "something strange" that was going on in Peters Canyon on the Irvine Ranch.

The young man had heard stories about how "old Lady Irvine's ghost roamed the canyon" and about a great white owl that dominated the canyon, so one night he decided to drive out to the canyon to check the validity of the rumors for himself.

"I really didn't expect to see anything," he said, but then, suddenly, a large, white form loomed up from the darkness.

"It seemed to be flying alongside my car," Winckler remembered. "It must have been the white owl. It swooped down and flew right along with me. . . . It stayed with me until I reached the entrance. Then I lost it."

Winckler conceded that he had not seen the ghost of Mrs. Irvine, but he stated that "several" of his friends had seen it. "And now that I've seen the owl of the canyon," he said, "they may have been telling the truth."

Miss Parrott's article declares that the bulk of ghost reports received by the *Herald-Examiner* consisted of incidents in which the percipients saw the forms of American Indians.

A Palmdale couple believed that they had acquired an Indian of protection in the ghost that had associated itself with the husband since their courting days. The wife had her first experience with the Indian before a serious illness. In her opinion, the ghost had materialized to help her through the difficult days ahead.

A lady design-engineer for a large firm in Los Angeles reported that the ghost of an Indian appeared to her and told her that he would not leave her apartment until she got rid of an Indian bowl that she had recently purchased. According to the ghost, the bowl had belonged to a maiden whom he loved. A white man murdered the Indian girl, and the brave became so upset he cursed the bowl and vowed that whoever should own it would always learn the awful story behind it.

The woman became so upset by the experience that she sold every antique she had in her apartment, then got herself to a psychiatrist.

According to the woman's report: "The psychiatrist told me there was nothing wrong. He admitted that a number of his patients had had similar experiences."

Miss Parrott's research indicated that ". . . a number of San Gabriel Valley residents have shared in the Indian experience. Men, women and children alike have reported seeing a male Indian appear in their yards, bedrooms and living rooms at all hours of the day and night. Most of the witnesses agree, 'He seems friendly enough. He stays for a moment or two, then fades. . . .' "

The newswoman's article concluded with the observation that most people who believe that they have had encounters with ghosts do not call professional investigators into their homes to carry out a careful session of "ghost hunting."

THE FATHER WHO CAME BACK TO SAY GOODNIGHT

Accounts of crisis apparitions, those ghosts of loved ones who appear to relatives and friends at the moment of physical death, are quite common and give impressive evidence to the percipients that the soul does survive the grave. Here is an account of such an experience that was given to me not long ago.

Margaret G. was half asleep when she thought she heard her infant daughter crying. She opened her eyes, looked about the room, and was startled to see that the bedlamp had been turned on and a man was leaning over the cradle.

"My God!" she gasped. Her brain struggled with a hundred different fears. Her husband was on an extended fishing trip. She was alone. Did the intruder mean to injure the baby?

But then she heard the man singing softly to the infant, an old lullaby that was a favorite of her husband's. Margaret got out of bed, forgetting for the moment that she should either be calling the police or getting her husband's revolver out of its hiding place in a dresser drawer.

"Who are you?" she asked the man. He had drawn the hood of his coat over his face so that she could not distinguish any of his features.

"Who are you?" she repeated, trying to dismiss all inflections of fear from her voice.

The man raised his head, and Margaret was shocked to recognize her husband.

"But why did you come home so soon without telling me?" she asked, tears of relief clouding her eyes.

She collapsed on the edge of the bed. "Do you know that you nearly scared the life out of me?" she scolded.

Then she noticed that his coat was soaked and that it was dripping water that smelled strongly of fish and Canadian lakes.

"Don't get the baby wet with your stinky fish water!" she said sharply.

She walked to the bathroom, threw him a thick towel. "You get those wet things off," she told him, "while I go make you some hot coffee."

Margaret was putting on her bathrobe when the bedlamp went out. She called for her husband, but he did not answer. She fumbled for the light switch, found it at last, turned it back on.

Her husband was gone.

She never saw him again.

On the same night that his image had stood over his infant daughter's cradle, singing her a farewell lullaby, he and his companions had decided to do some night fishing against their guide's advice. A sudden storm had come up, sending the men into the lake. Margaret's husband's body was never recovered.

A DEAD PRIEST ADMINISTERED THE LAST RITES

This account was collected in Brittany *circa* 1888 and was sworn to and attested to at that time by the principals involved.

Lomm Greun was a day laborer at a farm at Kerniz. Although he was too poor to afford a clock, he could generally wake up early enough to get himself dressed and to work on time.

One winter's dawn, Lomm started off for work, half awake. As he came into the high road, he met a priest carrying the Host, accompanied by a serving boy ringing a bell.

"Follow me!" the priest commanded Lomm in sepulchral tones.

Lomm knew that one could not refuse to obey a priest bearing the Body of our Lord, so he followed the clergyman, bareheaded, repeating prayers for the person who was about to receive the Last Sacraments.

After a brisk walk, they arrived at the home of old Guilcher, who lay stretched on his bed very nearly dead.

Lomm saw that two men attended the old man, but they both snored loudly as they slept in their chairs. Not once while the priest administered the Last Sacraments did the two men open their eyes. Lomm, who knelt all the while at the bedside, could not help feeling a bit disgusted with two such men who could sleep through such a solemn ceremony.

When the priest had completed his duties, he made the sign of the cross and addressed himself to the dying man: "My good fellow, I have long owed you the Sacraments. I have now given them to you and I have paid my debt."

Turning to speak to Lomm as they left old Guilcher's house, the priest said, "You may now go to your labors, Don't worry. You'll still be early."

Since Lomm had no opportunity to look at a clock, he feared that he might be late and be forced to face an angry employer. But when he arrived at the farmhouse, he found no one up but the housemaid.

"You're early, Lomm," she greeted him. "No one of the family is yet up, and I'm just lighting the fire for breakfast."

Lomm was pleased. Now he could go out and clean out the manger while the maid was getting breakfast, and he would be praised for being an industrious fellow.

When he returned to the house, he heard one of the other hired men talking about the death of old Guilcher.

"And it is a terrible thing," the man said, sadly shaking his head. "The old man died without the Sacraments."

"Oh, but that is not true," Lomm spoke up. "The old gentleman died as a Christian should. I myself attended the priest who administered Extreme Unction to him."

"There is a mystery here somewhere," the other hired man said, scratching the bristle on his chin thoughtfully. "As I walked to work, I met one of the men who were sitting up with old Guilcher, and it was from him that I learned of the old man's death. He and his companion had fallen asleep, and they did not even know at what hour Guilcher passed from life. He was on his way to town to fetch the priest, and he was scared sick at the reception that he would receive."

"Well," Lomm said, rising from the breakfast table, "I had better be off to the Presbytery and get the sleepy head off the hook. It was true that he and his fellow watcher were sound asleep, but the Sacraments were said over old Guilcher."

When Lomm had finished relating his story to the Rector, the priest said to him: "Lomm, that is a strange tale you tell, and I am only certain of one thing. The priest whom you followed this morning does not belong to this world. The carelessness of those two watchers might have cost old Guilcher his soul, but it has been proven again that God has infinite resources for salvation."

THE MALIGNANT SPIRIT THAT POSSESSED A THREE-YEAR-OLD GIRL

In November of 1969, word was released of the terrifying ordeal that had enveloped the Adams family of Gillingham, England, when a malignant spirit possessed their three-year-old daughter, Carol.

Overnight, their quiet seaside home became transformed into a nightmarish repository of horror.

From the outside, the modest terraced house looked much the same as any other in the Kent coast village. But on the inside, few townspeople could even guess at the devilish drama that played nightly within its walls.

According to Mrs. Adams, the terror had begun about a year before when lights began to flicker on and off, furniture began moving across the floors, closed doors opened, ashtrays tumbled off tables, and rooms once warm and toasty became suddenly icy as a morgue.

Frightening as such phenomena might have been for the Adams family, they counted it as next to nothing alongside the malignant metamorphosis that had seized their child.

"Our baby Carol began holding conversations with another person, using words no child of her age could know," Mrs. Adams said. "Sometimes she would answer herself in another adult voice.

"Sometimes," the distraught mother continued, "we could hear somebody singing—it sounded like a lullaby—while Carol was talking at the same time!"

Mr. and Mrs. Adams placed a wooden cross in their living room as an attempt to utilize what they considered symbolic of good to combat what they had assessed as a thing of great evil that had invaded their seaside cottage.

When Carol went near the cross, according to her parents, her face contorted into an ugly grimace. "She would bunch up her fingers into claws and bare her teeth. It was frightening."

Indeed, it would be frightening for any parent to see his child transformed into a savage, snarling beast before his eyes.

One afternoon, the Adams' neighbor Mrs. Marjorie English was startled to see the three-year-old Carol seated on the ledge of an upstairs window.

"Good heavens, Mrs. Adams," Mrs. English shouted as she rushed into her neighbor's home. "Your wee bit of a daughter is hanging out of an upstairs window!"

Mrs. Adams smiled nervously at her friend's alarm. "But that's impossible," she explained, "my husband has locked all the windows in this house."

"Then the little dickens has managed to unlock one of them upstairs!" Mrs. English protested. "Come along now! Let's be hurrying upstairs to rescue the tyke!"

"But Mrs. English," Mrs. Adams argued, "my husband has . . . er . . . taken the added precaution to nail down the windows. We've been having some . . . ah . . . trouble."

Mr. Adams came home in the midst of the argument that had been getting hotter by the moment.

Mrs. English simply could not understand how any mother could be so cool when her three-year-old child was hanging out of an upstairs window. And even if she were so nonchalant about her daughter's safety, could she not even expend the energy to go upstairs and check to see for certain if her baby might not be hanging out of a window?

With Mrs. English close at his heels, Mr. Adams went upstairs to investigate. For his solicitous neighbor's

benefit, he demonstrated that every window was securely locked and nailed solidly closed. While her father was testing the windows, a smiling, cherubic Carol appeared and wondered why Mrs. English was over fussing about in the upstairs.

One night not much later, Mrs. English's son, Graham, a stalwart 17-year-old, received a request from Mrs. Adams to come over and help her investigate strange noises coming from Carol's room. When they opened the door to the child's room, they found her stuffed inside a pillowcase.

"We got her out and carried her downstairs," Graham recalled, "but when we went back a few minutes later, we found the cot had been remade and the pillowcase, which had been thrown aside, was back on the pillow!"

Mrs. Adams had become convinced that a "supernatural presence" had taken over their home and was using Carol's body to manifest itself. She summoned a medium, Elizabeth Langridge, to come to aid them and to attempt to resolve matters in their spiritually ill cottage by the sea.

The medium later said that she had not seen anything materialize in the Adams house, but she had definitely sensed undesirable influences at work within its walls. In her opinion, a spirit entity, perhaps one tied to the earth plane by unnatural desires and malicious deeds, had possessed the child's body in order to delay his passing into a more spiritual plateau.

Although the visit of Elizabeth Langridge seemed to quiet the displays of the restless entity and cause it to leave its temporary fleshly fortress within Carol Adams' tiny body, Mrs. English announced her plans to move from the neighborhood just as soon as they could.

"I have always laughed at tales of this sort of thing," she said, shaking her head much sadder and much wiser. "But now I have seen too much. We're moving away from this house where the evil spirit dwelt!"

THE GHOST OF POPE JOHN WHO CURED A DYING NUN

Early in 1967, the *Irish Independent* of Dublin carried an account of a miracle healing that had brought a dying nun ". . . from death's door to a healthy normal life after Pope John appeared and spoke to her."

The story, reported to be exhaustively authenticated by medical details, is as follows:

Sister Caterina Capitani, a nun of the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, suffered from varicose veins of her esophagus, a condition thought to be surgically incurable. Since the unfortunate sister was always suffering hemorrhages, physicians decided to attempt an operation in the Medical Missionaries of Mary, *Clinica Mediterranea*, Naples, Italy. Two operations were performed, but they were unsuccessful, and Sister Caterina's condition steadily declined to the point where she collapsed because of an opening of the wound on her stomach.

Desperate to attempt any new therapy, the nun was sent further south for a change of air, but she was soon returned to Naples when it was decided that she was dying. The Medical Missionaries had no bed immediately available upon her arrival, so Sister Caterina was taken to a nearby hospital.

The next day, when they had accommodation, the

Medical Missionaries were advised that it was useless to move the dying nun, as she had only a very brief time in which to live.

But Sister Caterina lived because of a miracle performed by a "dead" Pope.

"I was all alone," she remembers. "I had been turned on my side and left all alone.

"Then I felt somebody place a hand on my stomach. Summoning all my strength, I turned to see Pope John standing beside my bed. He was not in his Papal robes, but I recognized him easily.

" 'Sister,' he said to me, 'you have called me so many times, and also so many Sisters, that you have torn out of my heart this miracle. But now do not fear. You are all right!'

"Pope John then told me to call in the sisters and the doctors so that a test could be made," Sister Caterina said. "But first he assured me once again that no trace of my illness would remain.

"Just before he vanished, he told me; 'Come to Rome and pray at my tomb. I await you.' "

The moment the ghost of the deceased Pope had vanished, Sister Caterina rose and felt no pain. When she summoned the sisters and doctors, they were amazed to find that the scar on her abdomen, which had been open and bleeding, had now completely disappeared.

"It is a miracle," one of the sisters remarked. "Sister Caterina was not expected to survive the day, yet that evening she was up and eating her supper with the community."

According to the *Irish Independent*, the miracle healing of Sister Caterina had occurred in May of 1966. "Ever since," the account reads, "the nun has lived a healthy life. This is a phenomenon that cannot be explained in a human way."

Psychic News, the well-known British Spiritualist weekly, agreed that the miracle was a splendid one and that it could not be "explained in a human way," but it could not resist musing that when such an intervention of spirit cured a nun, it was regarded as a miracle, but whenever a similar phenomenon occurred among Spiritualists, the Papacy would denounce the "miracle" as the "work of the devil."

SHE GAVE HER WEDDING RING TO A GHOST

Betty Ray S. was a new bride living in a small town not far from Jackson, Mississippi, when she underwent the following strange encounter with a ghost.

Betty Ray was totally devoted to her husband, who, at that time, was serving as a bomber pilot in England. It was World War II, and the retaliatory raids against Germany had begun. England had been rocked and blasted by the *Luftwaffe* and the terrible V-2 rockets, the "buzz-bombs," but now the battle for air supremacy was beginning to sway toward the Allies. Anxiously, Betty Ray awaited each new day's paper with its reports on the fighting in the European theater of combat.

Ever since Captain Charles S. had been sent overseas, Betty Ray had become a virtual recluse. She had been offered her old job at the bank, but she had refused in favor of staying home with her mother, listening to music on the radio, staring at her husband's picture, and "being true" to his love.

"Betty Ray," her mother would say to her from time to time, "there's an old saying about it not being good to love too well. Too much is never good in anything."

To these words, Betty Ray would reply with some romantic sentiment, such as: "The sweetest thing one will ever learn is how to love and be loved in return."

With the exception of occasional trips to the store for groceries, Betty Ray seldom left the house unless she was going to church or to a prayer meeting. Since they lived so near the church, often she could be inside its walls and home again without actually speaking to a single other member of the congregation.

One night, Betty Ray was awakened by the sounds of the church bell ringing. She rolled over on an elbow, held the alarm clock up to the window so its face would be illuminated by the streetlight. It was past midnight.

Puzzled, the young woman got out of bed and crossed her room to look out of the window that faced the church. To her amazement, the lights burned brightly, and she could hear the congregation beginning the first verse of "The Old Rugged Cross." Could it be that Reverend Hawkins was holding a special prayer meeting and nobody had notified her?

Betty Ray felt a bit angry as she hurried into her Sunday-go-to-meeting dress. Everyone in town knew that she didn't miss a single Sunday service or a single extra prayer meeting. Anytime there was an opportunity to pray for Charlie, Betty Ray would be right there taking full advantage of it.

She looked in on her mother, saw that she was sound asleep, decided against waking her. Tomorrow was Sunday, and she would be able to join her in the pew then. With a final fluffing of her long black hair, Betty Ray ran down the stairs and into the street.

When Betty Ray first opened the door to the church, she had been so surprised to find it so full of people that it was not until she had been seated for several minutes that she didn't really recognize anyone in any of the pews. And who was taking Rev. Hawkins' place up there at the altar?

Betty Ray knew that it was sinful to think of other things when the preacher was reading the lesson, but she was just full of confusion. Maybe some traveling evangelist and his people were borrowing their church just for that night.

"Mister," she whispered as softly as she could to the man seated next to her, "where you-all from?"

The man took no notice of her, and Betty Ray was beginning to feel more than a mite uncomfortable. She tried to ask a question of the woman on her other side, but she was just as "up-ity" as the man. Or maybe, she shamed herself, they knew how to behave better in church than she did!

"And now," the preacher was saying in a great, booming voice, "let us offer a special prayer for all those dear and brave boys who have lost their lives fighting overseas to keep our great nation free!"

Betty Ray squeezed her hands together extra hard. Whenever Rev. Hawkins offered such a prayer, she would make one of her own, beseeching God to take special care of Charlie—Captain Charles Beamond S. But tonight, she listened carefully as the preacher offered a long and fervent prayer for the souls of all the soldier boys who had died in the war.

My, she thought to herself, she didn't know who that preacher man was, but he surely could offer up a real prayer. Wouldn't hurt Rev. Hawkins none to sit in on a few of this preacher's prayer meetings. But if he held all his meetings so late, she surely couldn't fault Rev. Hawkins for being home in bed, what with Sunday his big day and all.

"Please, Miss!!"

Betty Ray was jolted back to full attention by an usher at the aisle handing her a collection plate. She could see that the quiet man next to her had already placed a dollar in the plate. She felt embarrassed. She only put that much in on Christmas and Easter.

She took the plate and began to pass it to the woman seated on her other side.

"*Please*, Miss!" the usher scowled, catching her hand, nearly making her drop the plate. "You must put *something* in the plate!"

People were turning around in their pews to look at her, and Betty Ray felt her cheeks flame with humiliation. She had left her room without taking even a nickel with her.

"*Please*, Miss!"

A frowning woman ahead of her was making little "tisking" noises with her tongue.

The man next to her was shifting uncomfortably, as if he didn't want anyone to think that she had come with him.

"I have . . . have . . . no money," Betty Ray managed to whisper to the usher. "I'm sorry, truly I am."

The usher looked at her as if she had confessed that she was an emissary of Satan.

"What's the trouble, Brother Sam?" the preacher said from the altar, his great booming voice echoing off the walls of the little church as if he were speaking from deep within a cave.

"This Sister say she's got no money," Brother Sam said, like a lawyer stating the case for the prosecution.

Betty Ray wished that she had stayed home in bed. She had heard that these traveling evangelists were too concerned about what went into the collection plates. Maybe they could preach up a storm, but. . . .

"Sister," the preacher thundered, "you *must* put something in the plate!"

Betty Ray felt that her hair would surely catch fire if she blushed any redder or any hotter. The whole church seemed to be buzzing with condemning whispers of "why-I-nevers," and "disgracefuls," and "shameless young womans."

"But what can I give you?" Betty Ray asked in desperation, willing to give nearly anything to extricate herself from the nightmarish situation. "I have no money."

"You have your wedding ring," the usher said harshly. "Put it in the plate!"

Betty Ray would give nearly anything to remove herself from the humiliating position of shame in which she had been placed, nearly anything—but not her wedding ring!

"Put in the ring, Sister," said the woman seated next to her.

"Put in the ring, Sister!" came the preacher's thunderclap voice.

"Put in the ring, Sister! Put in the ring, Sister!" the congregation began to chant from every pew.

In desperation, Betty Ray wrenched the ring from her finger and dropped it in the collection plate. No sooner had she removed the ring than a strange sensation of utter desolation seized her. She buried her face in her hands and began to weep.

At first she heard the voice calling her from what seemed to be a great distance away. It came closer and closer, and then she felt strong but gentle hands shaking her shoulder. She opened her eyes to look into the quizzical face of Rev. Hawkins.

"Whatever are you doing asleep in the pew, Betty Ray?" he asked her.

Betty Ray sat up, blinked startled eyes at the sunlight streaming in the stained-glass windows. "What . . . what time is it?"

"It's 8:30," Rev. Hawkins told her. "You are about an hour early for the service."

"Oh, this is terrible," Betty Ray said, unable to control the tears that stung her eyes. "I came to the prayer meeting here last night, and I must have fallen asleep."

Rev. Hawkins arched one of his craggy eyebrows. "What prayer meeting?" he demanded. "And how did you get in here? I left this place locked tighter than a drum yesterday afternoon, and I had to unlock it to get in here. You didn't break a basement window, did you?"

At this bit of information, Betty Ray began to sob uncontrollably.

After he had comforted her and quieted her, Rev. Hawkins asked her to tell him the whole story.

When he heard her account of the strange prayer meeting, he said sadly: "Come with me, Betty Ray. I don't think that whoever took your wedding ring took it very far."

Rev. Hawkins walked up to the altar, picked up the stacked collection plates. He found Betty Ray's wedding ring on the felt bottom of one of the plates.

"Take the ring, child," he said, handing her the symbol of her love for Charles. "You have loved much; and, I fear, you will now weep much."

On Monday morning Betty Ray received a telegram informing her that Charles' bomber had gone down in the English Channel as it returned to England from a bombing run over Germany. Her husband would have been killed on that same night that she had attended the strange prayer meeting, and at the very time when the demanding congregation of souls had forced her to give up her wedding ring.

MYSTERIOUS "GHOST" BLASTS AND PHANTOM WINDS AROUND THE WORLD

"Big jets" that are never spotted, earthquakes that are never recorded on seismographs, explosives that never leave debris, and UFOs emerging from other dimensions are the suspects most often named by those who have suffered property damage and who have had the blazes scared out of them by mysterious "ghost" blasts that have been reported across the United States and in other parts of the world.

State Police, Cornell University geologists, and Army and Air Force explosives specialists examined the gaping holes left on the Howard Lacey farm at Venice Center, New York, on each November 12th for 1966, '67, and '68, and ruled out ordinary explosives.

"It's getting to be an annual affair at Howard Lacey's place: something goes boom in the night and leaves a hole within 300 yards of the one before," stated an Associated Press release.

On each November 12th for three years in succession, Lacey and his neighbors were shaken out of their beds by a loud explosion during the night; then upon investigation, they would discover a large crater on or near his farm. Lacey's mystery blast in 1968 was the loudest and the largest of all. The noise could be heard more than 20 miles away, and the crater was 18 feet wide and almost five feet deep.

Pressed by newsmen for some kind of explanation, a Cornell University geologist could only shake his head and reply: "There's a hole in the ground out there—that's a fact. The rest is open to conjecture."

Another New England community, Moodus, Connecticut, has been plagued by mystery blasts for nearly 300 years, baffling scientists as well as inhabitants of the village.

"The noises sound just like explosions and come without warning at intervals of two or three years," said a researcher from Williams College, who had been investigating the phenomena.

"The 'Moodus noises' always occur within the radius of a few miles around the village," he went on, "but although we have frequently investigated the explosions, we have found no clue as to their cause. To the best of our knowledge, no smoke or steam is ever seen at the site of these mystery blasts and no buildings, trees, or rock formations have ever been affected."

Observers have stated that one of the weirdest aspects of the "Moodus noises" is that it seemed impossible to determine their direction. Residents at varying distances from the village invariably report the noises as having occurred near them.

Investigating scientists have long debated the origin of the "Moodus noises," but since the explosions have been recorded on Williams College and Harvard University seismographs, the most comfortable theory among orthodox researchers is that the "noises" are some form of earthquake phenomena.

The villagers of Moodus are far from satisfied with such an explanation, however.

A local hunter testified that he distinctly heard an explosion sounding above him, and not from beneath his feet.

Other inhabitants argue that if the noises were due to some form of earthquake, then tottering buildings or other damage logically would have occurred during at least one of the blasts.

In the summer of 1959, a violent shock, accompanied by two loud explosions, was reported in an area from 100 miles northeast of Amarillo, Texas, to Roswell, New Mexico, 200 miles to the southeast. In the town of Pampa, 55 miles northeast of Amarillo, the wall of a downtown building was cracked by the blasts.

Investigators found that seismograph stations said the shock could not have been caused by an earth tremor.

Further inquiry determined that no supersonic flights had been scheduled over the area at the time of the mysterious explosions.

Unexplained blasts in the sky over the San Francisco area in a three-day period during that same summer knocked dishes from their shelves and cracked the plaster on innumerable homes. Windows were shattered over a 35-mile area, and the unidentified explosions were also held responsible for opening the door to a bank vault, triggering fire alarms, and setting off a warehouse sprinkling system.

Within a few days of the mystery blasts in Texas, New Mexico, and California, two unexplained explosions rocked Henderson, North Carolina, within a period of 29 hours. Authorities there finally offered an official theory that some unnamed parties had suspended explosives from trees.

Those who make a serious study of such phenomena are quick to point out that such mysterious ghostly blasts, strange, powerful winds and inexplicable skyfalls date back to man's prehistory. Unfortunately, an uninformed public and an entrenched science regards a great deal of such documentation as pure, unadulterated kookery. But neither, it seems, do the skeptics offer explanations that are any more acceptable to the individuals who have endured mystery blasts and such phenomena as glowing, and sometimes fatal, rain.

On the Wednesday before Christmas, 1965, it rained in Buckeye, Arizona. According to oldtimers and the weather bureau, rain during the holiday season is unusual enough, but this rain left glowing spots that varied from a quarter of an inch to two inches in diameter.

Buckeye Civil Defense Director George Hamner checked the spots with his Geiger counter, and was relieved to find that they registered no harmful radioactivity.

Jerry Benson, a high school biology teacher, told reporters: "At first they looked like aluminum, but taking a real close look at them, they appeared to have a pale-green glow. The first time I walked across my backyard, I didn't see anything, but the more I looked, the more spots I saw.

"I don't believe that the rain activated spots of phosphorus in the soil," Benson went on. "An earthworm that got covered with the stuff turned into a glowworm!"

It is better to glow than to burn. Later in 1961, a rain fell near Huixtla in Chiapas State, Mexico, that, according to United Press International, killed several children. When the deadly liquid touched human skin, it produced blisters that later became dark stains that resembled hot oil burns.

On the night of Saturday, August 18, 1962, many San Franciscans thought that an airborne armada of enemy bombers was poisoning the skies above their city. Between 10:00 and 10:30 P.M., a mysterious rumbling noise that sounded like the flight of heavy super-bombers came from somewhere above San Francisco.

Navy spokesmen from Almeda Naval Air Station denied running any engines after 10:00 P.M.

A theory that atmospheric conditions could have been "just right" to magnify thunderclaps fell sour when authorities were reminded that the evening of August 18th was clear, with virtually no wind.

Nor was there any wind on U.S. Route 75 between Madisonville and Centerville, Texas, on April 19, 1963, when Louis A. Johnson of Houston was returning from a trip to Fort Worth; but that did not prevent "something" from lifting his automobile into the air, turning it completely around, and setting it back down on the highway, traveling the opposite direction from which he had come.

Johnson, a Marine Corps veteran of World War II, said

that his unexpected and unexplainable ride was more exciting then anything he had experienced in two invasions.

"I can't even describe the sensation," he was quoted as saying.

"When I realized what had happened, and that I'd come down partly on the shoulder of the road, I put the car into lower gear and eased to a stop. I didn't think the car had been hurt any, but when I got to Houston, I stopped at a service station and they found that the oil pump wasn't working too well."

Several eyewitnesses saw Johnson's automobile suddenly sprout wings, and in an attempt to fit what they had seen into some form of recognizable reality, most of them believed that a tornado had swooped down and momentarily hoisted him aloft.

There was no tornado, of course, and there are few tornados that could elevate a two-ton automobile into the air.

There are probably no tornados that would set an automobile back down on the highway without damage to either car or occupant.

Yet, something did lift Johnson's automobile into the air. Could it have been the same "something" that is responsible for the mystery blasts? Is it possible that some aircraft not visible to the human eye—or at least not always visible to the human eye—is soaring around breaking the sound barrier with horrendous sonic booms and occasionally reaching down to pluck up an automobile . . . or a garage!

There was just a slight breeze in the air at Albany, New York, on April 10, 1964, when Teddy Bix, who was in his yard raking leaves, saw the garage at 13 O'Connell Street leave its foundation.

According to the *Albany Times-Union*, the garage shot up about 15 feet, turned twice, barked slightly, then headed due east before losing altitude, skimming over a snow fence, and crash-landing in complete ruin more than 50 feet from its take-off point.

When William F. Rider, who lived downstairs at the O'Connell Street address, came home from work, he nearly drove his car into the garage that was no longer there.

Michael Keaveny, the owner of the property, told investigators that the garage was 15 to 20 years old, braced with interior beams, and had withstood some "terrific wind storms" without showing any ill effects.

The Albany weather bureau passed over the evidence that there was only a slight breeze at the time the garage had left its launching pad and decreed that a "freak gust" had created a vacuum that had raised the building.

The explanation does not sound too bad until one stops to reason that a vacuum, with stronger pressures on the outside, would be more likely to hold the garage in place, rather than hoist it up through the air.

If it was a "freak gust" that tried to steal Michael Keaveny's garage, it must have been a vicious and sadistic gust that seized a pretty 16-year-old schoolgirl from the playground of the Hanson High School in Yorkshire, England, at 9:50 A.M. on March 16, 1963.

Eileen Jane Welch was standing in the midst of 37 schoolmates waiting for the school bell to signal first class period when she was suddenly lifted high in the air to a height variously estimated from 15 to 30 feet.

Then, whatever fiendish "gust" had hoisted her aloft released its invisible grip. The pretty teenager smashed to the asphalt pavement. Eileen Jane Welch died two hours later. Her jaw, wrist, forearm, and thigh had been shattered, her pelvis ruptured.

The coroner asked the obvious question: "Why should such a thing have happened to her alone?"

Meteorologists admitted being totally baffled.

"It would have required a wind of at least 110 m.p.h. to have lifted that girl into the air," a meteorologist was quoted in the press. "But on the morning it happened, there was no gale or even a single gust of such velocity recorded anywhere in England."

Certain UFOologists have theorized that many of the thousands of men and women who disappear each year have been "sucked up into the air" by a force which emanates from UFOs hovering over their victims.

It may be possible that the same phenomenon—whether UFOs or something not yet dreamed of—responsible for plucking up and tossing back our automobiles, buildings, and people may also be responsible for the strange refuse that has fallen from the sky in connection with certain mystery blasts.

On February 19, 1965, an unexplained blast shattered the calm sky over Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, and a bizarre rainfall of plastic pellets showered an area four blocks wide and five blocks long—20 square blocks in all. Each pellet was flat on one side and rounded on the other and was about the size of a man's shirt button.

About a month later, authorities released an analysis of the pellets which identified them as bits of virgin polyethylene.

Most residents of Bloomsburg nodded their heads at the announcement and seemed to accept such a proclamation as an explanation of the mystery. Only a few citizens protested that the greater mystery had yet to be explained: *Where had the rainfall of plastic pellets originated?*

San Francisco seems to have more than its share of mystery blasts.

In May of 1951, the Rock Solanao and Contra districts were shaken with undetermined explosions for a period of two weeks. The ground shook, windows rattled and cracked, and pictures fell, as the entire area was rocked by blasts, explosions, shocks, and jars.

The *San Francisco Examiner* stated that its reporters had checked ". . . military facilities in the area, quarries, contractors, city and county officials, every commercial operation which uses explosives . . ." and found them all as mystified as anyone else.

According to the *Examiner*, the mystery blasts usually began around 9:00 A.M. and sometimes as many as a dozen would shake the area in a single day. The mysterious explosions were heard in all parts of Vallejo and across Carquinex Strait in Contra Costa County.

On June 15th, a blast of undetermined origin occurred which separated the causeway connecting Mare Island to the mainland. This mystery blast took place at 3:00 P.M.

and rattled several buildings. Day-shift workers at Mare Island were delayed on their way home while a crack several inches wide was filled.

Investigating Naval and shipyard personnel considered clue after clue to the mystery explosion, and thoroughly ran down a hint of sabotage and the accusation that an Air Force practice bomb might have gone astray. Sabotage was eliminated as a cause, and Air Force officers at the Fourth Air Force and at Hamilton Field countered the veiled accusation levied at them with an indignant denial.

As far as the public has ever been informed, investigators were unable to discover a single acceptable explanation for the mystery blast at Mare Island.

At 10:15 A.M., April 2, 1957, a tremendous blast thundered through six counties in northern New Jersey and was heard in Philadelphia. The explosion blew out windows, cracked sidewalks and swimming pools, sent alarmed housewives out into the streets, and shook the State House in Trenton.

Seismographs at Columbia University stated that no earthquake showed on their recorder. Meredith Johnson, New Jersey State Geologist, pointed out that Trenton does not lie on any major fault which could be responsible for a quake.

Spokesmen at McGuire Air Force Base denied that any of its F-860s had been flying over New Jersey that morning and explained that their pilots were under strict orders to fly at least 30 miles out to sea before attempting to break the sound barrier.

In addition to McGuire AFB's denial of responsibility for any sonic boom, each of the six airfields in the New Jersey-Pennsylvania-New York area which base jet aircraft stated that they had no jet planes aloft at the time of the mystery blast.

Once again, after exhaustive investigation, officials could find no culprits on whom to place the responsibility of a massive explosion of undetermined origin. All they were left with was the undeniable physical evidence of shattered windows, cracked walls, damaged sidewalks, ruined swimming pools, and sprung doorways to prove

that an unidentified someone or something had detonated a blast of heroic proportions.

A similar pattern of physical damage and super-volume noise minus an apparent cause and a responsible party occurred on the night of November 13, 1959, in Dade County, Florida.

Two powerful blasts at 6:25 and 6:27 P.M. shook houses, cracked plaster, shattered windows, and sent dishes rattling out of cupboards. The explosions were heard from Homestead to Hollywood, a distance of 45 miles, and the sirens on police cars, ambulances, and fire trucks went screaming in all directions.

The authorities soon discovered that Florida had not been invaded—at least not by a visible antagonist—but they never discovered what had caused the two terrific mystery explosions. No missiles had been fired over Cape Kennedy (then Cape Canaveral), and both Miami Air Traffic Control Center and Miami International Control Tower confirmed that no jet planes, commercial or military, had been over South Florida at the time of the thunderous blast.

In each occurrence of a mystery blast, the investigators have meticulously checked on the possibility of jet aircraft breaking the sound barrier, an earthquake being carried along a faultline, military facilities testing weapons, contractors and quarries moving rock with explosives; and in each case, the baffled researchers have found no one to whom they might attribute the guilt for a strange blast that may have shaken the area for miles around. In the continuing phenomenon of the mystery blasts, the most important item in the investigators' dossiers remains blank: *Who or what is causing them?*

GHOSTS OF FALCON LAIR

Shortly after the untimely death of silent screen lover Rudolph Valentino, eerie stories began to circulate about his ghost haunting certain of the actor's favorite places. Falcon Lair, the dream home which he had built for his bride, Natacha Rambova, became the most commonly reported site for a ghostly manifestation of the departed Valentino.

Those screen fans whose worship of the Great Lover approached idolatry began themselves to haunt the grounds in hope of catching a glimpse of his ghost. The more important and persistent of the faithful somehow managed to wrangle invitations to stay the night in the glamorous mansion.

A chosen few were fortunate enough to spend the night in Valentino's own bedroom. Like eager children awaiting a visit from St. Nicholas, the excited and expectant fans would lie there ready to receive and to transcribe any messages which Rudy might choose to deliver from beyond the grave.

All of Valentino's faithful knew that the great lover had firmly believed in the possibility of the spirit's return, and if his ghost did not manifest itself on the particular evening in which they were privileged to spend a night in Falcon Lair, they concluded that the fault lay either with

themselves or with adverse spiritual conditions in the atmosphere.

One story about Valentino's haunted mansion had a caretaker running down the canyon in the middle of the night, screaming at the top of his lungs that he had seen Rudy.

Another popular legend told of the stableman who had returned to the grounds at sunset one evening just in time to see the ghost of the master petting his favorite horse.

The myth-makers made a great deal of the fact that the New York jeweler who had won the bid for Falcon Lair later backed out of the transaction. Those supposedly in the know proclaimed that the restless spirit of Rudolph Valentino had not wished to be usurped by the physical presence of one who dealt in such materialistic items as jewelry.

A woman from Seattle, who was visiting her friends, the caretakers of Falcon Lair, claimed that she had been alone in the mansion writing a letter when she heard muffled footsteps and saw doors open and close. She had been completely alone in the house except for Rudy and Brownie, Valentino's two favorite watchdogs—dogs trained to bark or snap at everyone—except their master.

MICHIGAN'S LIVELY FARMHOUSE GHOSTS

The manifestations on the Red A Horse Farm outside of Romeo, Michigan, began in the summer of 1966. Bob Alexander, a premedical student at Macomb County Community College, was sleeping out in the barn one night when he awakened to see two orange lights floating a few feet off the ground.

The Alexanders have lived in their 150-year-old farmhouse for thirteen years, and Edward Alexander bites down on his cigar and grins skeptically whenever some member of his family starts to tell him about the ghosts that prowl their home.

But his wife Audreye, his daughter Pam, and his sons Bob and Michael insist that they have witnessed a wide range of ghostly phenomena in their home, including:

Doors opening, doorknobs turning, coat hangers rattling.

Footsteps sounding in the hallway, creaking up and down the stairway.

The sounds of a car arriving, complete with slamming doors.

Bob told Tom Nugent a (Detroit) *Free Press* staff writer that one night he had stood looking at the open door to the upstairs bedroom. "I swear that I saw both knobs turning at once, all by themselves," he said.

The family is so used to hearing the phantom car pull into their driveway that according to Pam: "We just say, 'It's only the ghost,' I mean, it's no big deal any more."

Although Edward squirms uncomfortably whenever his wife begins to describe the haunting in their old farmhouse, Audreye rejects his diagnosis that she is "nuts."

Reporter Nugent described Mrs. Alexander as a "slim, sandy-haired woman with a growing national reputation as a horse breeder" (at the time of the interview she had a stable of 37 Arabian horses) and quoted her as saying: "Some nights I'll be sitting in the library and these things, whatever they are, will come racing through the room. Sometimes they move so fast that they tip the lampshade over."

Mrs. Alexander said that whenever the "things" became that rambunctious, she would yell at them: "Cut it out! You're scaring me!" And they would leave her alone for a few weeks.

Skeptical Edward Alexander, a consultant in special education for the Macomb County Intermediate School District, will, under pressure, admit that the old house harbors a few things which even his rational approach to the phenomena will not explain.

For example, there is a sofa in their bedroom that stands securely up against a door which once opened into another room. The room has since been removed from the house plan, and the door now leads nowhere. Yet, there are many mornings when the Alexanders awaken to find that the sofa has been moved and the door is open.

"No," Edward concedes, "I don't know how that happens. But it happens."

The only previous inhabitants of the old farmhouse of whom the Alexanders know anything were named Handy. Audreye commented that Mrs. Handy was a bit strange in that she painted certain rooms in the house completely black. "Mr. Handy hung himself in the barn," she added.

The Alexanders certainly make no claim that the Handys are haunting them. They told Tom Nugent that they had no idea what might be disturbing the home.

But if any listener arches a skeptical eyebrow, Bob

Alexander is quick to state: "We're not crazy. But we've got to tell the truth. These things happened just the way we said they did. Maybe it's some kind of extrasensory thing. Who knows?"

The Alexanders insist that they have come to accept the eerie state of affairs at the old farmhouse.

"I wouldn't think of moving," Mrs. Alexander told Nugent. "The ghosts are part of the character of this house. I'm not afraid any more. I've made peace with them."

The journalist wrote that Mrs. Alexander had no more than made her declaration of peaceful coexistence with the ghosts when the lamp turned on by itself.

Edward Alexander bit down on his cigar and told Nugent that a short circuit was responsible for the suddenly glowing lamp.

Audreye smiled and said: "That's them."

GHOST IN A CALICO DRESS

They say that the ghost of Rebecca Dorrington walks at night in the 118-year-old hotel in the tiny High Sierra mountain hamlet of Dorrington, California. The town itself was named for Rebecca, the Scottish bride of John Gardner, an 1850's homesteader who built the old hotel.

Those residents of Dorrington who believe that the ghost still walks attribute the phenomenon to the violent manner in which Rebecca left this life.

Some say she froze to death in a blizzard; others maintain that she was killed by Indians; and other accounts insist that she fell down a flight of stairs and bled to death. Then, apart from these widely varied theories of her demise, is the belief that Rebecca died from pneumonia sometime late in the 1860's or early in the 1870's.

However she died, it is the contention of many that her restless spirit has not ceased to acquaint newcomers to the earth plane with the force of her personality. According to accounts going back several years, the old hotel is the scene of such classic manifestations in the paranormal repertoire as doors banging open and shut, lights flashing on and off, and furniture being shifted.

The Los Angeles *Times* Service (October 31, 1969) quoted Ed Wilson, whose late wife was a great-granddaughter of Rebecca Dorrington, as saying that the tales of the ghost were repeated only by "damn fools, drunks, and historians." But he concedes that ". . . we never knew how Rebecca died."

Leonard Anderson, who owned the old hotel from 1947 to 1960, admits that the place is full of weird noises and strange squeaking sounds, but he feels that the villagers "use Rebecca's ghost to spice up the conversation, when things become dull in Dorrington."

But in spite of the doubters, numerous villagers have sworn that they've met the restless spirit of Rebecca Dorrington wearing her calico dress in darkened corridors of the hotel.

THE PHANTOM NAZI OFFICER

According to reports coming out of Gravenhurst, Ontario, in September of 1968 a deserted hotel was hosting a most unusual kind of ghost for North America.

"It's a Nazi officer wearing a German uniform with a swastika cross attached to his jacket," declared one teenaged eyewitness of the haunting.

One girl told a story of being lifted off the ground and dropped by the ghost, and her account was backed up by the corroborating testimony of several witnesses.

Another teenager said that he had reached out to touch the phantom and had found the thing to be very cold.

Actually, the appearance of a "Nazi ghost" in Canada is not as strange as it may sound upon the first hearing. The old hotel at which the ghost has been sighted used to house German prisoners during World War II.

"We've seen it loitering in the dining room and sometimes strolling across the grounds," stated one observer of the eerie phenomenon.

Others saw the ghost as "a black cloud drifting across the yard, ranging from six to eight feet in height."

Those who observed the thing in either guise affirm that it was a creature of habit. It seemed always to appear between 11:00 P.M. and 1:00 A.M., and usually followed the same route from the dining room to a certain point on the grounds.

LADY GHOST AT THE OLD COVERED BRIDGE

There will probably never be a housing development near the Stowe Hollow, Vermont covered bridge.

According to area residents interviewed by Janice Elliott for the Associated Press (January 31, 1969), people who have begun to build houses near the bridge have been frightened off by the apparition of a young woman.

Oldtimers in the region state that the ghost is that of a young bride who was left waiting at the altar by an irresponsible groom. The jilted woman left the church, heading for her elusive lover's home near the covered bridge on Hollow Road. As she was crossing the bridge, something startled her horse, causing it to bolt and throw her to her death on the rocks below the bridge.

Traditionally, in the wee hours of morning, the sorrowing bride returns to search for the lover who betrayed her and humiliated her by jilting her on their wedding day.

Those who have toyed with the idea of building a home near the scenic old bridge, have reversed their decision when they discovered that their house would be in the path of the lonely lady ghost.

A HAUNTED APARTMENT IN RACINE, WISCONSIN

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Smith moved into their apartment in June 1969, and found the place perfectly to their liking. Then in early fall, while his wife was in the hospital having their first child, Dennis had an eerie feeling that someone was standing next to him as he lay dozing on the living room couch.

He opened his eyes and caught a glimpse of what appeared to be a humanlike shape. When he sat up, it disappeared immediately.

Discounting it as some trick of the eye, Dennis thought no more about the strange illusion.

But the next night, just as he was falling asleep in bed, the mysterious form returned. Even though it once again disappeared within brief seconds after its materialization, Dennis was becoming a bit uneasy.

His wife returned from the hospital, and life continued as before for a week or so. Then, one night as he was sitting in a living room chair, Dennis felt something "burn" him on the right leg.

Neither of the Smiths could offer any explanation for the sensation, but Dennis and his wife agreed that they could sense a "presence"—someone or something in their apartment.

They went to bed early, about 9:00 P.M.

That was when the horror began.

"I was in bed no longer than ten or fifteen minutes when I felt hands around my throat," Dennis said later.

The powerful hands cut off his breathing, and Dennis grappled desperately with his unseen attacker. With strength born of panic, he managed at last to tear the hands from his throat.

When he turned on the light, he found the room empty except for his wife and baby. But, according to the testimonies of the Smiths, there were finger marks on Dennis' neck.

The young couple were seized by terror, and they decided to leave the apartment at once and spend the night in a relative's home.

About 11:30 P.M., however, the Smiths discovered that they had left their apartment in such a hurry that they did not have an adequate supply of clothing for their baby. Summoning their courage, they returned to the flat.

Dennis Smith later told Richard Wesnick of the Racine Journal-Times that he saw a "fog-like shape" move across the doorway in their bedroom. Dennis saw the ghostly fog "as resembling something similar to a large ball." Mrs. Smith described it as "tall, almost human-like."

Smith called the police department and related his account of the eerie invasion of their apartment to a friend on the force, Sylvester Harris.

On the next evening, Harris accompanied Smith back to the haunted flat. The two men agreed that Smith would sit inside alone while Harris stood watch outside.

Then, according to the account in the *Journal-Times*:

"Smith was seated on a chair next to the television set when he glanced into the bedroom on his left and again saw the form. He jumped up and ran out the front door as Harris ran inside.

"There was nothing there.

"The bedroom was empty and there was no other exit except into the room where the policeman stood."

The Smiths decided that although they didn't really "believe" in ghosts, they might as well be on the safe side and move. Mrs. Smith testified that she had actually felt something touch her on two different occasions, and both of the Smiths had often experienced the uncomfortable sensation that an invisible someone was standing somewhere behind them.

Reporter Wesnick talked to Mrs. Veronica Geret, a resident of the building who had lived there for eleven years, four of which were spent in the Smith apartment. Mrs. Geret said that she had never experienced anything out of the ordinary, but she commented on the fact that the Smith apartment had been subject to a high turnover of tenants in the past years. "They never stay more than a few weeks or months," she told the journalist.

Mrs. Geret said that two young girls had rented the apartment before the Smiths moved in, and they had only lived there about two weeks when they moved out, leaving many of their belongings behind in the flat. The long-time tenant of the building would not say, though, that she believed their brief stay had been due to any haunting or psychic phenomena disturbing them.

Dennis Smith was not interested in theorizing about what may or may not have infested the apartment. He will always have the memory of those finger marks on his throat.

DEADLY "GHOST FLAMES" THAT CONSUME HUMAN FLESH

On Saturday September 12, 1969, Mrs. Wilma Finer, aged 55, of Dubuque, Iowa, died in the University of Iowa Hospital of burns received at her home two days before. Mrs. Finer had been found in the yard of her home later Thursday with all her hair and clothing burned off. What puzzled the authorities was that there was absolutely no sign of a fire in her home, and only small spots of grass had burned in the yard.

On August 19, 1966, Doris Lee Jacobs of Oceano, California, burned to death in her trailer home at 1342 23rd Street. Although Miss Jacobs suffered burns on over 95 per cent of her flesh, the inside of the trailer was only partially scorched. Officials were baffled when pressed for the origin of the fire, because it was the woman, not the trailer, that had burst into flames.

Shortly before 9:00 P.M., January 4, 1970, Ed D. James checked into his room at the Hotel Phillips, 106 W. Twelfth Street, Kansas City. He asked the bellman to bring him a glass of ice. When the bellman returned, he found the room afire and James lying on the floor of the room.

The bellman acted immediately, and enroute to General Hospital in Kansas City, James was still able to talk lucidly. Sometime during the night, however, he became paralyzed on his left side and lost his speech coordination. Despite these difficulties, he was pronounced in fair condition.

Dr. Paul R. Holzworth, James' physician, described the burns:

"The distribution of burns was very unusual. The top of his feet and the top of his knees and the left side of his face, chest, and arms were burned. And there's one round burn spot on his back. It seems almost impossible that his clothes weren't burned."

Dr. Holzworth suggested the possibility of radiation burns, adding that, "if it were flame-type burns, you would anticipate his clothing would have burned, too."

Fire officials say flash burns can sometimes damage tissue without igniting clothing. Excessive X-rays, it has also been suggested, can hamper the ability of a person's blood to carry oxygen within his system.

In the conclusion of their report, officials offered a warning against harmful X-rays emitted by several models of color television sets, naming the hotel television set as the culprit in James' frightening experience. The only problem is that the sets in the Hotel Phillips were black and white, not color.

Just what was the fiery horror that struck these people? What could cause a human being to erupt into flames while leaving nearby physical surroundings virtually unscorched? In such cases where there is a body left at all, the clothing worn by the unfortunate victims frequently shows no trace of the slightest singeing.

On March 26, 1965, seventy-year-old Herbert Shinn was found by a friend in his Camp Chaffee Road, Foster Park, California home. The visitor was shocked to discover Shinn in his kitchen with severe burns on his chest, back, and spine. Thirty minutes later he was pronounced dead at a hospital.

Subsequent investigation could find no evidence of a fire in either the house or Shinn's yard. He had been found alone, burned by intensely hot flames of unknown origin.

In December 1965, Mrs. Katherine Elizabeth Chaires became a human torch in the living room of her apartment at 210 Liberty Street, Oneida, New York. A friend who lived in the same building, Edward Wilcoxon, burned his hand in an attempt to remove Mrs. Chaires from the greedy flames.

Though the horror of spontaneous human combustion (SHC) is as old as the flesh it consumes, only recently has science begun to take an objective look at the phenomenon. Medical investigations have revealed that the flickering blue flames seem to reach out most often to the elderly and to women.

Such observations are not new, however. In the first decades of this century Charles Fort—the almost fanatical collector of scientific anomalies—wrote: "I think that our data relate not to 'spontaneous combustion of human bodies,' but to things, or beings, that, with a flaming process, consume men and women, but, like werewolves, mostly pick out women."

Fort's own files, revealed in *Lo!* relate the following instances:

Elizabeth Clark, found covered with burns in an unscorched bed.

Barbara Bell, aged seventy-seven, discovered on a davenport with burns covering her body. All indications were that the body had long been in the midst of severe flames.

Mrs. Thomas Cochrane, found burned almost beyond recognition in her home in Rosehall, Falkirk, England. The charred body was surrounded by pillows and cushions that had somehow managed to remain unsinged.

Modern technology and improved laboratory conditions have begun to yield more information concerning this bizarre phenomenon. The information gained, however, has only had the effect of making SHC even more baffling.

Each theory that scientifically trained men have devised has only been subsequently disproven by their own science. SHC investigation is in the paradoxical, but familiar, position of being able to determine only what it is not. Cases of citizens erupting into flames remain unclosed in police departments across this nation, in England, and on the Continent.

In the January 1965 number of the journal *Medicine, Science and the Law* (5:37-3), Dr. D. J. Gee presented a case of SHC.

According to Dr. Gee's account: "The victim was a slim lady, eighty-five years old, who was in good health apart from having suffered a slight 'stroke' six months before her death. She lived with her son and daughter-in-law in a ground-floor flat."

On the day she died, in November 1963, the elderly woman was left alone in the house by 9:30 A.M. She had remained in bed. Three hours later her neighbors noticed smoke escaping from the kitchen window. They hastily called the fire department, which managed to extinguish the fire. The remains of a human body were found on the hearth of the living room.

Two hours later Dr. Gee, a lecturer in forensic medicine at the University of Leeds, was able to personally visit the home. At that time he found the room still oppressively hot. He observed that the walls and furnishings were grimy with soot and that some of the paint on the walls had blistered.

The structural damage to the room was slight and confined to the immediate area of the fireplace, but even there only a part of the wooden edge of the hearth had been burned. A section of the floor—approximately a foot in diameter—had been damaged, yet the rug remained unburned. The rug did, however, contain tiny, greasy, fragments of fat.

At the mortuary, the body was found to be far too damaged to allow a definite answer to the cause of death, but Dr. Gee concluded that ". . . the most probable course of events seemed to be some form of cardiac or cerebro-vascular catastrophe, accompanied by a fall into the fire, followed very rapidly by death."

The disproportion between damage to the body and to surrounding objects indicated to Dr. Gee that the body was ignited initially at the head which, like a candle, had then been sufficiently inflammable to burn without any other source of heat. The draught from the chimney prevented the spread of the flames to other parts of the room.

Dr. Gee was not content to rest with these findings, however. To answer his own curiosity, as well as to further his study, he consulted an earlier work by Dr. Gavin Thurston.

In an article published in 1961, Dr. Thurston provided a comprehensive review of all SHC literature covering a span of many centuries. Among the conclusions he reached were:

1. That under certain conditions a body will burn in its own fat with little or no damage to surrounding objects.
2. The combustion is not spontaneous, but started by an external source of heat.
3. This has occurred where the body has been in the draught up a chimney from a lighted fire. Oxygenation is good and the pull of the flue prevents outward spread of the fire.

To test these theories, Dr. Gee devised a few experiments. He already knew that human body fat when melted in a crucible would burn only at a temperature somewhere around 250 C. A cloth wick in liquid fat will burn like a lamp, however, even when the temperature of the fat has fallen as low as 24 C.

In the laboratory, Dr. Gee prepared a test-tube wrapped in a layer of human fat and enclosed in several layers of thin cloth. One end was exposed to the flame, then the flame was removed. Complete combustion took place, nonetheless, in approximately one hour.

Next, a covering of skin was sewed between the layer of fat and the layers of cloth. Combustion again proceeded effectively.

In both experiments the draught of air from an extractor fan was positioned so that combustion progressed in a direction opposite to the flow of air.

Dr. Gee himself would be the last person to declare these tests conclusive, but he does feel that "they do appear to support the theory put forward by Dr. Thurston, which seems the most reasonable explanation for the occurrence of these curious phenomena."

Yet, these "curious phenomena" have the habit of being reluctant to fit reasonable explanations.

Take, for example, the grisly death of a Chelmsford, England, woman on September 20, 1938. In the midst of a crowded dance floor this woman suddenly burst into blue flames. Horrified dancers stopped to try to extinguish the blaze, but it seemed to be fed by her own flesh. In minutes she was a heap of ashes.

The reader will recall that Dr. Gee's experiments showed that it took one hour for a test-tube-sized layer of fat and cloth to burn. How incredibly more intense would flames have to be to ignite and fully consume a human body in a matter of minutes?

In April 1956, the burned, blackened body of Mrs. Eva Ola Godfrey was found in her Wichita, Kansas, home. Mrs. Godfrey was seventy-six. The woman had been fully clothed, but there were no burns on either her clothing or her hair. Her body was badly blackened.

July 30, 1937, saw a macabre end to a family outing. A woman had been paddling about in a small boat with her husband and children at Norfolk Broads in England. In just a few minutes, the woman began emitting terrible blue flames, until she was reduced to an insignificant pile of ashes and the usual tell-tale soot that accompanies SHC phenomena. Neither her husband, her children, nor the wooden boat sustained any burns. One wonders where Dr. Thurston's flue was to keep the fire from spreading.

Joan Hart walked into the parlor one day to find her invalid sister Mary engulfed in flames. Joan quickly grabbed a rug, wrapped it around Mary in order to stop the fire, then somehow managed to carry her badly burned sister upstairs. Mary was laid on a bed with clean sheets.

While Joan ran to fetch help, however, Mary once again erupted into flames. When Joan came back with a doctor, the only things that remained on the bed were a pile of ashes, a head, and some fingers. Incredibly, there were not the slightest scorch marks on the sheets on which the human cinder had lain. There was only that coating of greasy soot.

In those instances in which the victim does manage to live for a while after being discovered in flames, the explanations are no less easy to procure. All the victims can do

is reflect the bewilderment they feel and mutter that, somehow, they were suddenly on fire. Mrs. Madge Knight, of Aldingbourne, Sussex, England falls into this category.

Early on the morning of November 19, 1943, the household, consisting of Mrs. Knight's husband and sister, was awakened by Mrs. Knight's screams. Rushing to determine the cause of her distress, they found her lying in bed with a badly burned back, covered with bedclothing. The bedclothes were undamaged.

"There were extensive burns all over her back," the examining physician remarked, "but there was no smell of burning."

Asked repeatedly how it had happened, the woman only insisted that she did not know. She died in a hospital on December 6th from toxemia.

At the subsequent inquest, four doctors were present. They suggested that the burns might have been caused by some corrosive fluid. However, the hands, head, hair, bedclothes, and Mrs. Knight's own clothing showed no signs of any scorching or burning.

The police were unable to find any evidence in the house of burnt or stained floors, and they could find no bottles containing acids. Furthermore, all fires in the house were electrical, and none were operating at the time of Mrs. Knight's mysterious fiery assailant.

From the information so far accrued, we may summarize, as did the French writer H. de Duvergier:

> Spontaneous combustion commences by a bluish flame being seen to extend itself, by little and little, with an extreme rapidity, over all the parts of the body affected. This always persists until the parts are blackened, and generally until they are burned to a cinder. Many times attempts have been made to extinguish this flame with water, but without success. When the parts are touched, a fattish matter attaches itself to the finger, and still continues to burn. At the same time a disagreeable smell, having analogy to burnt horn, spreads itself through the apartment.
>
> A thick smoke escapes from the body and attaches

itself to the furniture . . . In many cases the combustion is arrested only when the flesh has been reduced to a cinder and the bones to powder. Commonly the feet and portion of the head are not burnt. When the combustion is finished an incinerated mass remains, which is difficult to believe can be the whole of the body. All this may happen in the space of an hour and a half. It is rather uncommon for the furniture around it to take fire; sometimes even the clothes are not injured.

The above is an accurate assessment of the phenomenon in terms of what it does. Unfortunately, how SHC does it remains a mystery. A handful of ashes and a layer of greasy soot do not give the trained men of the autopsy room a great deal with which to work.

All doctors, police investigators, and scientists can do is to speculate on a rational explanation for a thus-far irrational phenomenon. Some of these speculations may seem far-fetched, but then so is the thought of a human being bursting into flames, his own body fat providing the fuel, and burning until the remains may be scooped into a shoebox.

Momentarily leaving behind the more scientifically oriented theories of Drs. Thurston and Gee, let us examine some of the historically popular theories, as well as those of more recent vintage.

Ball lightning traditionally has been a favorite explanation for spontaneous human combustion. These curious phenomena seem to have an intelligence of their own. They are well known to mankind, being associated also with UFOs, hauntings, and the famed "ghostlights" in many sections of the United States. This "great ball of fire" has been known to hover over parked cars, then follow them when the key is in the ignition and the car is traveling down the road.

Ball lightning will also follow pedestrians and cyclists. With an uncanny aim, it can enter an open window and astound any observers by exiting through a closed window.

How does ball lightning phenomena relate to SHC? The experience of Mrs. Louis Matthews of South Philadelphia may offer more clues to this puzzling enigma. In the fall of 1960, she was resting on the living room sofa when she was startled to see a huge red ball of fire enter the closed living room window and pass through the Venetian blind without harming either.

Her first thought was that the atomic bomb had been dropped, and she buried her face in the sofa. Timidly, she raised her head and watched the strange ball of fire make its way through the living room into the dining room, and out a closed dining room window. As it traveled, the ball made a sizzling noise.

Considerably shaken, Mrs. Matthews put a call through to her husband at work, begging him to come home.

After he had walked in the door, he rushed to his wife in dismay. When he had left that morning, Mrs. Matthews had possessed a full head of hair!

As the ball of fire had passed through the room, she had felt a strange tingling sensation in the back of her head, and she had held up her hand.

The back of Mrs. Matthews' hand had been burned, and as she touched the back of her head, she realized that all the hair in that area had fallen out, leaving that spot as hard and clean as her face.

The fireball is an external source, and it may provide the answer in some cases of spontaneous human combustion. But what of those cases in which a body is blackened with burns while clothing remains unscorched? These cases seem to indicate an internal source of the combustion, not an external one. The investigators who have concluded that the source of these mysterious fire lies within the victims have entered intriguing areas of study in order to support their claims.

Certain researchers have studied the cases of those people who seem to be able to store up large amounts of electricity in their bodies.

This ability is not so strange and uncommon as one might suppose. A former professor at the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn has even established a consulting firm designed to locate "hot" employees for their prospective employers. A *"hot"* individual is one who possesses a potential danger to certain industries because of his ability to absorb and to discharge large jolts of static electricity. The studies conducted by Professor Robin Beach have led him to estimate that one in 100,000 individuals has this electrifying capability.

In England, Brian Clements of Harrow is such a person endowed with this bizarre quality. His body stores such a tremendous amount of electricity that when he touches metal there is a blue flash. By touching the terminals, he can push the dial on a voltage meter up to 4,000 volts. Clements himself believes that a truer reading would be nearer 10,000 volts, "but I haven't got a machine big enough to measure such an amount."

His wife and children have no need of the bigger machine to prove his point. As it is, Clements must touch a metal pole when he returns home before he even dares to touch his family. Were he to hug them before he had grounded himself, he would deliver enormous electrical jolts into their bodies.

Then there are those tormented individuals who seem to have an affinity for lightning. These are numerous case histories in which one man will sustain a great many "attacks" of this nature during the course of his life. There are even indications that susceptibility to being struck by lightning runs in the family.

The study of the effects of lightning are placed in our "internal sources" file, because scientists are trying to determine why the body chemistry of some individuals attracts volts of electricity while others do not. The results they reach may eventually be of great importance to the study of SHC.

Poltergeists have been considered as a possible source for SHC phenomena. Poltergeist activity is the type of "haunting" in which objects get thrown around by an invisible, but apparently intelligent, force. People besieged by poltergeists can expect a great deal of spontaneous combustion to take place. The current theory regarding this phenomenon is that it is directed by a disengaged portion of an agent's subconscious self and that it is usually associated with adolescents or with persons undergoing sexual adjustment.

The arguments against a poltergeistic explanation of SHC are, first, that the poltergeist does not, as a rule, kill its target. It will inflict injury, but not death. Second, most cases of spontaneous human combustion involve the elderly, men and women long past sexual changes and adjustments, who frequently live alone.

Poltergeist phenomena do offer the researcher subconsciously directed action, and it was only one step further for writer Vincent H. Gaddis to speculate on the possibility of a subconscious death wish, or, suicide.

In *Mysterious Lights and Fires* Gaddis points out that some victims of SHC were alcoholics, a method of committing slow suicide. Furthermore, these people died when they were intoxicated or drugged, and very alone. The subconscious mind was in control and had no need to fear the voice of reason expressed by the conscious.

It has already been noted that the majority of the victims of SHC were elderly. Gaddis suggests that they could have been tired of life, their resistance lowered. Many of them were invalids, or poor, or dying in rest homes. They led sedentary and idle lives.

"The death wish is common in human experience, far more common than most persons realize," Gaddis states. "There are few persons who have not considered suicide at some time in their lives. Consciously, the instinct for survival (or, perhaps, the fear of death) is strong, and at least some physical courage is required. So most persons, weary of living, facing problems they cannot solve, suffering from ill health and without inner resources, turn to drugs and drink."

It was a dreary day, September 18, 1952. Across the river from New Orleans, in Algiers, Louisiana, Mrs. Stalios Cousins reported a fire in the apartment above her own.

When the firemen arrived, they had to force open the door. Inside, they found the body of a man swathed in flames.

The well-trained men smothered the fire with a blanket and sent experienced eyes around the rest of the apartment, seeking additional fires. To their astonishment, the only flames in the house were concentrated on the flesh of the victim, Glen B. Denney, age forty-six.

Although no matches, burned or unused, were found, nor were there any signs that the man was a smoker, there was no doubt that the man had suffered extensive burning. The local papers declared that Denney had died from burns.

Two days later, however, the coroner announced that Denney had not died from burns, but from arteries cut in both wrists, one arm, and both ankles. The amount of carbon found in his lungs proved that Denney had still been alive while immersed in the flames.

Otto Burma, a writer, made a personal investigation of the death. He discovered from the coroner that Denney had, after severing his arteries in five places, poured kerosene over his body and ignited himself with a match. This information suggested a great many questions to Burma.

How could a man with severed arteries in both wrists, spurting blood, manage to hold a match and keep it dry enough to light it? How could a man with sufficient medical knowledge to cut five major arteries not also know that he would die soon enough without having to resort to the additional agony of fire?

"In the body of average size about one percent of the total blood is pumped out of a severed wrist artery with each second," Gaddis points out. "Death occurs immediately when as much as fifty percent is lost.

"Glen Denney had slashed four arteries in four places. No matter how deft his incisions, he would have had to have lost a great deal of his blood by the time he laid down his knife."

The blood was found in the kitchen, indicating that it was there that Denney had slit his wrists. The body, however, was discovered in the bedroom, meaning that, losing blood at the rate of four percent per second, the man had somehow walked into the bedroom, drenched himself with an inflammable fluid—no traces of which could be found—and struck a match before he collapsed.

Three weeks after Denney's death, the police officially closed the case with a ruling of suicide. The subsequent report did not satisfy Otto Burma, however.

Commented Burma: "In (my) mind there is no doubt that Denney did, in fact, attempt suicide. But while in the process of carrying out this act his body caught fire due to some unknown cause." (Fate, May, 1953.)

In December of 1956 Mrs. Virginia Caget, Maunakea Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, discovered her friend Young Sik Kim, a seventy-eight-year-old cripple, being consumed by blue flames.

In the time it took for the firemen to arrive, Kim and the chair in which he was sitting had burned to ashes. Despite the intense heat required to consume a human body, nearby curtains and clothing remained unsinged.

On April 7, 1969, Mrs. Grace Walker, a sixty-year-old woman of 5334 Cedar Avenue, Long Beach, California, was discovered on the floor of her living room with burns covering ninety percent of her body. Incredibly, she was still alive when found, but she was pronounced dead upon arrival at a hospital.

True to form for a case of SHC, the only traces of fire in Mrs. Walker's home were the ashes left from her clothes. The flames erupting from her flesh had burned them away. No burners were lighted on the stove and not one match was unearthed in the house. Friends and relatives verified that Mrs. Walker did not smoke and never carried matches on her person.

How much heat must be present to cremate a human body? Can oil burners, fires, or matches provide enough heat to reduce a person to mere ashes in under an hour?

In an article on SHC in *True* magazine (May 1964) written by Allen W. Eckert, the question of cremation is discussed.

Eckert presented the experiments of Dr. Witton Krogman, professor of physical anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, regarding the effects of fire on flesh and bone.

Krogman's experiments involved bones still encased in human flesh, bones devoid of flesh but not yet allowed to dry out, and bones that had dried out completely. He burned cadavers in a variety of ways, using such combustibles as hickory, oak, gasoline, oil, coal, and acetylene.

Krogman's experiments led him to conclude:

"First and foremost, it takes a terrific heat to completely consume a human body, both flesh and skeleton. I've watched a body in a crematorium burn at 2,000 F. for over eight hours, burning under the best possible conditions of both heat and combustion, with everything controlled. Yet at the end of that time there was scarcely a bone that was not still present and completely recognizable as a human bone. It was calcined (reduced to its original matrix) but it was not ash or powder. Only at over 3,000 F. have I seen a bone fuse so that it ran and became volatile. These . . . are very great heats that would affect anything flammable within a considerable radius of the blaze."

Dr. Krogman's work came to light with the now classic case of Mrs. Mary H. Reeser, St. Petersburg, Florida.

Mrs. Reeser was last seen comfortably ensconced in an armchair in her apartment, 9:00 P.M., on a Sunday evening. Eleven hours later there existed no other remains of the 170-pound woman than a shrunken skull, one vertebra, and a left foot wearing the charred remnants of a black slipper.

Mrs. Reeser had taken her customary seconal tablets and had been facing one of two open windows. A small wooden end table was beside her. She had been smoking a cigarette.

When a Western Union boy informed the owner of the apartments, Mrs. P. M. Carpenter, that no one responded at the Reeser apartment, Mrs. Carpenter became worried. It was not like Mrs. Reeser, a light sleeper, to miss the sound of a knock.

When Mrs. Carpenter went upstairs and put her hand on the doorknob, however, she jerked her hand away with a scream. The knob was so hot it had burned her.

Mrs. Carpenter's scream alerted two painters who were working nearby. They rushed to her aid and succeeded in forcing open the door to the apartment.

They found the room intolerably hot, despite the two open windows.

They also found the heap of ashes that had once been the end table, the armchair, and Mrs. Reeser.

Realizing that they had a most unusual case on their hands, the St. Petersburg police called in the F.B.I. When it was learned that Dr. Krogman was visiting his family just across Tampa Bay, he was asked to please take a look at the case. He agreed.

According to Eckert, Krogman considered several possibilities:

"Had lightning struck her? No. No storms, no lightning, no thunder the night of July 1. Having swallowed sedatives, could she have fallen asleep in her chair, dropped her cigarette, ignited the nightgown and chair and burned? Hardly likely, since such a fire couldn't possibly have caused the heat—over 3,000 F.—necessary to consume her. Even if an ordinary fire had reached that temperature, the room—or the whole building—would have been heavily damaged. Anyway, though the windows were open, no one saw smoke or smelled any burning odor. Was Mrs. Reeser burned elsewhere and then placed in the room? Residue in the room and other evidence ruled this concept out. Could an electrical induction current have gone through her from faulty wiring? Virtually no short circuit could have caused such massive destruction."

Furthermore, a spokesman from a local mattress company declare that there is not enough material in any overstuffed chair to cremate a human body. The materials most often used are cotton, combined with felt and hair or foam-rubber cushions. None of these are combustible materials, although they do possess properties that would allow them to smolder for a long time.

Police Chief J. R. Reichert was finally handed a report from the F.B.I. that brought the case to an end, but came no closer to solving the mystery: "There is no evidence that any kind of inflammable fluids, volatile liquids, chemicals or other accelerants had been used to set the widow's body ablaze." The case was officially ruled accidental death.

Spontaneous human combustion is a horror that could engulf anyone, at any time. It is an elusive enemy: the more our laboratories learn about the clues it leaves behind, the more mysterious does it become. The phenomenon defies all logic, so far as our present knowledge is concerned.

Perhaps the sentiments of Dr. Krogman most accurately describe our helplessness in dealing with SHC:

"(SHC) is contrary to normal experience and I regard it as the most amazing thing I've ever seen. As I review it, the short hairs on my neck bristle with vague fear. Were I living in the Middle Ages, I'd mutter something like 'black magic'!"

Fortunately, there are men like Dr. Krogman, Dr. Gee, and Dr. Thurston, who, instead of trying to ignore spontaneous human combustion because it does not fit into the realm of orthodox scientific textbooks, are actively and earnestly studying SHC in an attempt to discover its cause.

Until they do, though, the blue flames of death will continue to strike . . . suddenly, without warning . . . anyone.

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S LADY GHOST

J. Edward Thomas is director of the largest English language school in Spain, and he has always ridiculed the nonsense of ghosts and hauntings. Yet, the director of the British institute is embarrassed to admit that he has a lady ghost on his hands.

Thomas is a matter-of-fact Australian who edited scientific journals in London before he traveled through Spain in 1957 and decided to invest in a language school in Cordoba. Later, he bought out the school's owner, opened another school in Cadi, then joined the British institute in Seville in 1962. Today, Thomas directs a teaching program that tutors over a thousand Spaniards and several hundred students from other areas of the globe.

For the last ten years Thomas has been residing in a two-story Sixteenth Century palace, which is also the institute's home and which houses the school's 9,000 volume library of English books. It was during the winter of 1964 when Thomas saw the palace ghost for the first time.

"I happened to be looking through the glass in the door," he told correspondent Nino Lo Bello, "and I saw her walking down the stairs. When she stepped into the patio, she disappeared. She made not a sound, nor did she speak. But she was as plain as could be. From the way she was dressed, I would judge her as a woman from the 1920s."

Thomas remembered that the ghost appeared around 8:00 P.M. on a January night. "Unfortunately," he added, "no one else saw her."

But two years later, in January 1966, almost to the very day, the lady ghost returned at approximately the same time in the evening, and Thomas saw her again.

"She was all gray," he recalled for the journalist, "but very, very pretty. Once again she vanished."

The pretty phantom did not show up in January 1968, and the next time Thomas saw her was in January 1969.

"I was all alone again, in the same place, and still as sober as I have ever been," Thomas stated. "I was determined to speak with her, but as soon as I opened my mouth, she disappeared instantly. I cannot tell you how frightfully disappointed I was. I want so much to get to know her."

Thomas confessed that he kept an eye out for his ghost every day from the same spot in the patio near the head of the stairs. He is extra vigilant in January, the month in which he has seen her three times.

"I still don't believe in such things," he said, "but nevertheless, I have no intentions of giving up my ghost!"

Thomas admitted that the ghost of the lovely lady had begun not only to disturb him but to fascinate him.

"I am trying very hard to bring about a meeting and make her acquaintance," he said soberly. "I have had the Seville police in several times to inspect the place minutely, but they have found no trace whatever of anything that could solve the mystery."

GHOSTS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Before Carl Weschcke purchased the 90-year-old mansion on St. Paul, Minnesota's, Summit Avenue, it had been occupied by the St. Paul School and Gallery of Art. Although the mansion had a long history of strange occurrences, the first evidence Weschcke had of its mysterious past was when he found an upper floor window that simply would not stay closed. Even when he nailed the window shut, he would find it open the next time he visited the room.

Then when Weschcke was remodeling the house, a workman reported seeing the shadow of a figure on an upper floor.

After he had moved into the mansion, Weschcke heard strange noises in the night. He could identify the unmistakable sounds of footsteps moving in the hallways, people coughing, doors being shut—yet he was certain that he was completely alone at all times when these audible manifestations occurred.

The ghosts did not only walk at night. One afternoon when Weschcke was alone in the library of his house, he turned to see the figure of a man standing in the doorway, no more than ten feet away from him.

In relating the incident, Weschcke has said: "Neither of us moved. There was no sound. We just kept standing face to face. He wore a dark suit. His face was long and thin. His hair was bushy and white. He seemed to have an expression of surprise when he saw me. I think we must have stood there for about thirty seconds. The figure simply faded away. It didn't turn a corner. It just evaporated and then there was nothing."

Malcolm Lien, who once headed the school that was housed in Weschcke's home and who later became director of the St. Paul Art Center, remembered that many of his teachers had sensed the presence of "ghosts" in the building.

"These people were sound, educated, and well-read. Yet many had this feeling of some kind of supernatural or unknown thing in their building," Lien said.

Dr. Delmar Kolb, director of the Museum of New Mexico in Santa Fe, remembered the time when he lived in an apartment in the mansion. Dr. Kolb was certain that his brain will always carry the memory of the evening when he felt two fingers on his forehead.

"I was in a cold sweat," he said. "I reached for the light, but when I turned it on, there was a blue flash and the room was dark."

Dr. Kolb stated that he did not sleep the rest of the night.

Two days later when he opened his cupboard door to get a paper bag, the bag leaped out and hopped across the kitchen floor. There was no mouse inside, and there was no draft in the room.

"A short time later," the artist said, "I awoke to see a figure at the foot of my bed."

At first Kolb thought that he had surprised an intruder rummaging in his apartment. The thin figure was dressed in black, but Kolb was surprised at the top hat the man wore.

Then: "He moved away from me and faded—evaporating through a solid brick wall."

It was not long after that he moved out of the mansion.

Two college students occupied the room after Dr. Kolb had retreated from the Unknown. Although the students did not know of their predecessor's experiences, one of them reported seeing the floating head of a child above his head.

A student in another room in the mansion told a staff member that he had seen the head of a man floating in his apartment.

Not long ago, Carl Weschcke, who has now comfortably adjusted to the four-story mansion and made it his home, said that he was no longer bothered by the ghosts. "I just take whatever is there for granted," he commented. "I feel that it has come to accept me."

At St. Mary's College in Winona, Minnesota, students in Heffron Hall annually report strange tapping noises up and down the hall at odd hours of the night.

"It's just the ghost of Father Lesches tapping about with his cane," the knowledgeable student will tell the less well-informed.

Numerous students and faculty have also reported the existence of "cold spots" in the hall and other areas of the building. In the jargon of the ghost hunter, "cold spots" are said to manifest themselves in dwellings said to be afflicted with ghostly visitors of one kind or another. Such icy areas are regarded as the core of any phenomena existing in that building.

These reports brought in psychical researchers equipped with sensitive measuring devices of varied descriptions and talents. During a stay of ten days, the investigators found that at 1:45 A.M. each evening, the temperature dropped as much as ten degrees in the areas of the cold spots. It was learned that Father Lesches died between 1:30 and 2:00 A.M.

The legend of the Ghost of Heffron Hall began in 1915 when Father Lawrence M. Lesches attempted to murder Bishop Patrick R. Heffron. Father Lesches had been turned down repeatedly in his requests for a parish of his own, and it was thought that he must have suffered a mental breakdown and focused the blame for his rejections upon Bishop Heffron.

At his trial, Father Lesches was adjudged legally insane and committed to the Hospital for the Dangerous Insane at St. Peter, Minnesota. Although he was later pronounced sane, the clergyman was never released, and he died in the asylum in 1943.

But even before Father Lesches death, the campus of St. Mary's was the scene of eerie and bizarre happenings.

In 1931, Father Edward W. Lynch, a close friend of Bishop Heffron and a known opponent of Father Lesches, was found dead, sprawled across his bed in such a manner that his body and the bed formed a cross. Although Father Lynch's death presented mystery enough in itself, it was the condition of the cleric's body that really brought in the world of the weird. The corpse was charred to a crisp, but there was not a trace of fire anywhere else in the room. Not even the bed itself bore the slightest trace of flames.

The priest's prayer book was the only other object in the room that had also fallen victim to the mysterious fire. According to witnesses, only one passage in the entire book could be made out: "And the Lord shall come again to the sounding of trumpets."

Those who knew both Father Lynch and Father Lesches shuddered when they heard which particular passage had survived the consuming flames. During one of their numerous arguments, Father Lesches had repeated a Biblical passage to Father Lynch: "And the Lord shall come again to the sounding of trumpets."

No one was ever able to explain Father Lynch's death, and in that same decade, another priest died in a campus fire, and three others went to a flaming death in an airplane crash.

In a poll taken of St. Mary's students in 1968, it was learned that more than half of those questioned believed that some strange thing walks in the night in Heffron Hall.

On October 23, 1963, Mrs. Coleen Buterbaugh was walking across the campus of Nebraska Wesleyan where she was a secretary to Dr. Sam Dahl, dean of the college. At exactly 8:50 A.M., she entered the old C. C. White Building, which is used primarily as a music hall. Her heels clicked softly as she walked down a long corridor to an office at the end. Yawning, whispering students were changing their first-hour classes for either another classroom session or a welcome cup of morning coffee, just

before Mrs. Butterbaugh entered the office of Dr. Tom McCourt, a visiting lecturer from Scotland. It was, she mused to herself, a typical early morning scene at Nebraska Wesleyan. But what waited for Coleen Buterbaugh in Dr. McCourt's office was far from typical.

As she stepped into the two-room suite, Mrs. Buterbaugh was struck by an almost overwhelming odor of musty air. When she opened the door to the office, she had observed that both rooms were empty and that the windows were open. But now, "I had the strange feeling that I was not in the office alone," she later told Rose Sipe of the Lincoln *Evening Journal*. "I looked up, and for what must have been just a few seconds saw the figure of a woman, standing with her back to me, at a cabinet in the second office. She was reaching up into one of the drawers."

Mrs. Buterbaugh could no longer hear the noisy babble of the students in the outer hall as they passed from their classes. She had the eerie feeling that she had suddenly become isolated from present-tense reality.

The "other" secretary, who seemed to be filing cards so industriously, was tall, slender, and dark-haired. Her clothing was definitely of another period—a long-sleeved white shirtwaist, an ankle-length brown skirt.

"I still felt that I was not alone," Mrs. Buterbaugh told the newswoman. "I felt the presence of a man sitting at the desk to my left, but as I turned around there was no one there.

"I gazed out the large window behind the desk and the scenery seemed to be that of many years ago. There were no streets. The new Willard sorority house that now stands across the lawn was not there; nothing outside was modern.

"By then I was frightened, so I turned and left the room!"

Mrs. Buterbaugh hurried back to her desk in Dean Dahl's office. She sat down at her typewriter, fitted the dictaphone plug to her ear and tried to work on the letters that the Dean had dictated. It was no good. Her nervous and shaken fingers refused to obey the recorded voice of her boss. She decided that she simply must tell the story to someone. It was too much for her to keep to herself.

When she entered the Dean's office, he rose to his feet and helped her to a chair, for she seemed so pale and shaken.

He listened to her story, and then, without comment, asked her to accompany him to the office of Dr. Glenn Callan, chairman of the division of social sciences, who has been on the Wesleyan faculty since 1900. Again, Mrs. Buterbaugh was fortunate enough to have a listener who heard her out and treated her story with respect.

After carefully quizzing Mrs. Buterbaugh and piecing together a number of clues from her strange tale of a step into the past, Dr. Callan concluded that the secretary had somehow managed to "walk" into the office as it had been at some time in the 1920's. The apparition she had seen had undoubtedly been that of Miss Clara Mills, whose office it then was. Miss Mills had come to Wesleyan as head of the theory department and instructor in piano and music appreciation. She had been found dead in her office in the late 1930's.

UFOS—GHOST SHIPS FROM OTHER DIMENSIONS

July 13, 1969, was a rainy night in Iowa's Cedar River Valley. On the Warren Barr farm, about seven miles south of Garrison, Pat Barr, 15, and her visiting cousin Kathy Mahr, 19, were preparing for bed at about 11:00 P.M. when they heard something that "made a noise like a jet."

"It was like a real low-flying jet," Pat Barr said, "so I got up and looked out my north bedroom window, and I saw this object. It was like two coffee saucers, one on top of the other, and it had two sections of lights, one on each side. It was almost a perfect circle, but more oval-shaped. It used a spinning, circular motion to get to where it was going. And after I couldn't see the object any more, I could still see two red, glowing, triangular-shaped lights."

Kathy had joined Pat at the window upon her cousin's first outcry, and she, too, saw the metallic shine of the UFO and its row of lights in the middle.

Pat estimated that the object was moving at a speed that could allow it to travel three miles in 30 seconds, "so it couldn't have been a helicopter or an airplane."

According to Kathy Mahr: "The object hovered over a field north of the house, then it just disappeared so fast we couldn't see which way it went."

At breakfast the next morning, Warren Barr laughed off the girls' story as a figment of their dual imaginations, but when he did chores a few minutes later, he discovered a 15-foot scorched circle, some 40 feet in diameter, in a bean field just 30 rods from his house.

"I know that those beans were perfectly healthy the day before," Barr later told journalists from the *Cedar Valley*

Daily Times and WMT-TV *News*. "And I know that circle wasn't caused by chemicals or armyworms. It just looked like extreme heat had been there in that circle. There wasn't any sign of flame; it just looked like things had been wilted down and turned brown."

The Barrs decided to keep the incident quiet. They didn't want their friends and neighbors to think that they were flying saucer nuts who had seen little green men running through their bean field.

But their secretive saucer sighting was brought to light when, a few weeks later, Kathy's brother attended a class reunion in Minnesota and a man connected with a St. Paul TV station overheard him telling about the mysterious hole in the Iowa bean field. Almost at once an investigating team was on its way to Iowa to get the full details of the UFO landing.

On August 6, 1969, *Cedar Rapids Gazette* farm editor, Al Swegle, commented: "The Barr family doesn't say that the object was from another planet. But their beans haven't had any trouble with armyworms either. . . ."

"When lightning strikes, the center of a circular area is usually barren, but the edges taper off," Vivian Jennings, Cedar Rapids area extension crops specialist, said. "In Barr's field, the whole 15-foot area was barren, and other portions of the field were not affected."

Over a WMT-TV news broadcast, Pat Barr, who was at that time a senior at Benton Community high school, expressed her opinion that the dark, metallic object with red-orange lights which she had seen hovering over their bean field, was ". . . an air-flying object from outer space. It wasn't anything earthly."

Her father, Warren Barr, laughed when the question of the object's origin was put to him: "I hesitate to guess, but it was something unusual, I'll put it that way."

WMT-TV mused: "The thought occurs, and wouldn't it be wild—if scientists somewhere in the universe are poring over soil samples and have almost reached the conclusion that the Earth is made of green beans!"

Iowa City businessman and independent UFO researcher Glenn McWane made plans to drive up to the Warren Barr farm and investigate matters for himself. On Monday, August 11, 1969, McWane arrived in Van Horne, Iowa, around 11:00 A.M.

"My first stop was the local filling station where I got some gas and started up a conversation about the sighting," McWane stated in a report to this author. "Both at the gas station and later at a restaurant, townsfolk seemed to laugh about the possibility of a UFO landing in the Barr's bean field, but everyone seemed to like the Barr family and to think a great deal of them. In short, they were respected as sober, reliable citizens."

McWane next went to the bank in Van Horne where Mrs. Warren Barr is employed. "She was very nice to talk to," McWane noted. "Although she was reluctant to speak at length about the sighting and the scorched circle in their bean field, she did call her husband and arrange a meeting so that I might discuss the matter with him."

McWane drove to the farm, found Warren Barr friendly and cooperative. He showed the investigator the bare circle in the bean field and politely answered all questions.

At that time, according to McWane's impressions, Warren Barr and his family were convinced that a UFO had been responsible for the scorched mark. Barr told McWane that they had received a number of strange telephone calls since the case had gained public notice, but he quickly affirmed that he had laughed them off as having come from kooks and cranks.

McWane was, of course, primarily interested in a personal examination of the circle in the bean field.

"This spot was most interesting," he commented in his report. "My thoughts were that there actually was a landing of some kind there. Even though I did not arrive on the farm until almost a month had elapsed from the time of the alleged landing, there was still hardly anything growing within the circle. A couple of small bean plants were beginning to grow again, but the circle was basically clean. I found no evidence of the plants having been pulled out, but I did find a number of plants just beyond the periphery of the ring that appeared to be dying.

"The few small plants within the circle that seem to be growing back appear to have a dead stem about two inches from the ground. The area immediately below this apparent dead area and the portion of the plant above this brownish band both give the appearance of a normal, green, healthy stalk. I have taken samples of the soil and will provide an analytical report as soon as possible.

"Although Mr. Barr was very friendly, he emphasized the fact that he did not wish publicity. He does not seem even remotely interested in 'cashing in' on his experience."

After McWane had examined the circle from the ground level, he hired a private airplane and arranged to have aerial photographs taken of the scorched region. Pilot Don Wehmeyer used a Honeywell-Pentax Spot Matic, 55mm, and shot his film at 1-500 sec. from a lens opening of F 1.1 to F 5.6.

On September 10, 1969, McWane sent this author a copy of the analysis done of the soil sample. Although a slightly higher than normal radiation count was discovered, the reader should not conclude that UFOs are necessarily radioactive or that they are deliberately landing in our crop fields in an attempt to raise the radiation level of an environment that has already been poisoned by nuclear waste.

According to McWane:

"The soil sample which I took from the middle of the 'saucer circle' on the W. Barr farm on August 11, 1969, was delivered to a contact with the University Medical Department.

"My contact's findings were a slightly higher than normal radiation yield. In addition, from the grass enclosed with the sample, he found that the Strontium 90 was also just a little higher than normal.

"On questioning my contact and reminding him that the alleged landing occurred on July 19th and that my samples were taken on August 11th, he went on to state that the count must have been higher, because of the amount of rain that had fallen in the area between the time of the sighting and the time that the samples had been obtained. The fall of rain, he explained, would have diluted the count.

"My contact has taken into consideration the amount of fallout considered normal for this area and any nuclear testing that might have been done at this time. My contact is among those employed to keep a close check on the amount of radiation in the Iowa air and soil, and he is always informed on how much fallout is absorbed by plants and how much is absorbed by cows eating grass and how much is consequently given out in milk."

Within a month after McWane's investigation of the alleged UFO landing on the Warren Barr farm, this author received a letter from a lineman employed by an Iowa power and light company. According to the lineman, he had noticed a series of "burnt circles" near one of their power lines. When he made inquiries of the farm family who lived there, they openly stated that they had seen UFOs hovering over the powerline and landing in the nearby pasture. The lineman stated the facts as he knew them and indicated that he would disclose the location of the farm and do anything he could do to assist in an investigation of the mysterious circles.

I was intrigued and eager to begin an investigation at once; but unfortunately, I was committed to an upcoming book promotion tour. I reached for the telephone and called Glenn McWane, who readily agreed to conduct a preliminary investigation of the case.

McWane found the farm, located in Clayton County, Iowa, to be literally covered with scorched circles similar to the one he had found in the Cedar Valley bean field. The greatest concentration of circles were to be found along the power line. A favorite contention among certain segments of UFOlogists is that UFOs somehow withdraw electrical energy from the lines. There does seem to be a great deal of circumstantial evidence in support of such a theory, but no actual proof that such kilowatt kidnapping exists.

In addition to the scorched circles, McWane noticed definite impressions of what appeared to be indentures caused by some sort of landing device. For purposes of size estimation, he sent his cigarette lighter down near one indenture.

Mrs. S.H. was a very friendly and warm person, McWane found, who seemed to accept the regular visitations of the UFOs with little emotionality. McWane assessed Mr. S.H. as a successful farmer, "level-headed, calm, not likely to jump to excitable conclusions." Mr. S.H. had had military service and had served at various missile sites around the United States.

Mrs. S.H. told McWane that "odd things" had been occurring on their farm for about two years. It seemed that all the neighbors had seen the "odd things" as well.

Then, early in the spring of 1969, the children had seen a round, red object hovering over the power line. One of the boys climbed a tree and the other watched the thing cautiously from around a corner of the barn. Seemingly aware of their presence, the object shone a red beam of light at each of the boys.

Later, the more courageous of the boys, the one who had remained to watch while the other sought sanctuary in the farmhouse, said that he had seen the object rise, then lower itself farther down the line and land behind a clump of trees. The next morning when the family went to investigate their sons' story, they found a circular burned spot and the impressions of what they assumed must be landing gear.

"And now you say that your family has seen these objects on several occasions?" Glenn McWane asked Mrs. S.H.

"Oh, yes," the farm wife answered. "They usually land right after 5:00 P.M. You know, late afternoon. In the winter months, it can be pretty dark by 5:00 P.M. There's only been one exception. One Sunday afternoon an object landed about two o'clock."

"According to the family and the neighbors who have witnessed the landings," McWane said in his report to the author, "the UFOs are not seen until they are relatively close to the ground. Then—bang!—they suddenly appear and lower themselves to earth.

"It would seem that the objects are somehow able to remain invisible until they reach a certain altitude. Or, to conjecture a bit, they may be entering our dimension through a doorway that just happens to be open on the S.H. farm.

"It may be, as some UFOlogists suggest, that the UFOs come from another world existing outside our space-time continuum and that they are most often seen in areas

wherein these "doorways" exist. Such a theory might explain how UFOs have suddenly disappeared with our Air Force jets in close pursuit.

"At any rate," McWane concluded, "my opinion is that if a mysterious 'someone' did not want to be observed by a lot of people, the area in which the S.H. farm is located would be a perfect spot to conduct secretive activities. It has heavily wooded areas, and a river runs through the farm. There is also a large cave in the area."

At about the same time Glenn McWane was investigating the burned circles on the farm in Clayton County, this author's brother-in-law, who farms in Kossuth County, Iowa, found that he had stopped plowing just too early the night before.

"That thing was hanging there, right above me," his neighbor told him. "It hung there for hours!"

"What thing are you talking about?"

"Well, damn it, you promise not to laugh at me," the neighbor demanded, "but I think it must have been some spaceship or something from another world!"

My brother-in-law assured his neighbor that he would not laugh, and he encouraged the man to tell more of his experience.

"The damn thing glowed so bright that I could have shut off my tractor lights," he went on, loosening up. "I don't know how high up it was, but not too high. And it just hung there without moving. Not a sound. I couldn't stand it any more after an hour or so and I went home and told my wife and kids to look out the window. They all saw it, and one of the kids has a small telescope, so we set it up and looked at the thing.

"Then, my gawd, we saw folks moving around inside the thing. I mean, we couldn't see what they were doing, but we could see them moving back and forth in front of those bright windows. Finally, the thing moved off. It was the weirdest thing I have ever seen."

One can only guess how my brother-in-law's neighbor would have reacted if he had glimpsed one of the craft's occupants moving about on the ground instead of watching them dimly through a telescope.

In November 1969, Glenn McWane arrived on a farm home in Alamakee County, Iowa, just one day after a thirteen-year-old farmer's son claimed to have seen a small occupant emerge from a landed UFO. The following is an edited transcript of McWane's conversation with the boy.

McWane: Now just where did you see this little man?

Boy: I was out getting the cows home for milking. They were late. When I walked out in the pasture, I could see that they was all huddled together near the far side. Between me and the cows was this shiny thing that looked like an upside-down mixing bowl. There was a red light flashing on and off, scaring the cows.

McWane: When did you notice the man?

Boy: I heard someone walking off to my left, and when I turned I saw this little man coming toward me.

McWane: How tall was he?

Boy: I'd say about three feet or so.

McWane: How was he dressed?

Boy: He was dressed from head to toe in a white space suit.

McWane: Why do you say space suit?

Boy: 'Cause it looked a lot like the suits our astronauts wear.

McWane: Was there anything on his back?

Boy: No. He was just wearing this tight-fitting white suit that covered his hands and his feet, as well as his body. And, of course, he wore a helmet.

McWane: Describe the helmet.

Boy: It was yellowish-brown colored, and it seemed too big for his little body.

McWane: You mean, his head seemed out of proportion to his body?

Boy: Yeah, that's right. But then he probably had a lot of brains. You know, it must take a lot of brains to come flying in from outer space or somewhere.

McWane: Did he carry anything in his hands?

Boy: No, but his arms were awfully long. They hung past his knees. Oh, another thing: his hands looked normal, but his feet seemed to have two prongs.

McWane: You mean toes?

Boy: I don't know. But the wildest thing was when he took off his helmet and looked at me.

McWane: He took off his helmet? Please describe what he looked like.

Boy: His skin was colored a light, real pale green, and his head was completely bald. No hair at all. His eyes were really big, but his nose and mouth were nothing but slits.

McWane: Did he smile at you, or. . . ."

Boy: He didn't really have any kind of expression at all. Just blank. He wiped his forehead with the back of his free hand—you know, like someone who has been working hard and sweating—then he got back into the saucer and it took off.

The pastures and fields of Iowa surely rank no higher on the UFOs' list of preferred landings than many other regions across the North American continent.

On May 23, 1969, the Canadian Press carried the following story, date-lined Chapeau, Quebec:

> Flying saucers have landed near this town 100 miles north of Ottowa, according to a local farmer.
>
> Leo Paul Chaput, 54, says, "We were sitting in the kitchen 'round the back when we saw this big white light that lit up the field. It was just like day."
>
> Chaput's wife and eight children agree. Strange machines have visited their 10-acre farm several times.
>
> Three large circles of apparently singed or matted grass are Chaput's evidence. The circles, each 27 feet in diameter with a perimeter about one foot wide, look as if an object with legs inside landed on the grass.

Shortly before 4:00 P.M. on June 28, 1965, Joseph Stavano, an Ohio farmer, discovered that something circular had denuded a section roughly 26 feet across in one of his wheat fields. In the center of the larger circle, Stavano found a smaller crater, about 28 inches in diameter and five inches deep.

According to investigator Douglas M. Bloomfield:

"Throughout the bare area, clumps of soil were left, as if stalks had been yanked out of the ground, roots and all.

"Stubble, plant fragments, and wheat kernels were scattered lightly over the bare ground. In an outer ring, 13 feet wide, encompassing the bare spot, the wheat was flattened, the stalks lying like spokes in a wheel. . . ."

Gene Duplantier, Editor of the Canadian publication, *Saucers, Space & Science,* told of investigating a scorched circle near his home in Ontario. The man on whose property the circle was discovered told Duplantier that he had seen a bright light in his woods, but had not paid any attention to it. A bit later he had looked out the window again and had seen a light moving over the treetops, finally disappearing toward the west.

"Two weeks later he was walking in this area where the light was seen, and lo and behold, a nearly circular ring about 35 feet in diameter stopped him in his tracks," Duplantier reported.

"The ringed area appeared scorched and nothing was growing in this ring. The center of the circle and outward of the ring had grass, moss, and sumach trees growing on it. Any sumach trees in the ringed area were knocked down at the base in a clockwise direction, as if some tremendous force had blown them over.

"The only explanation, after much mulling over, was that the light, or UFO, was the cause of the round mark on the ground," Duplantier concluded. "The object must have hovered over the sumach trees in the center of ring, as they were untouched. The light would have been about 10 to 12 feet above the ground. As the ground was on a slant, the higher part was scorched more than the lower part, so the UFO must have been hovering horizontally for this near landing."

Cases of scorched circles discovered after UFO sightings and landings have been investigated in South Africa, Australia, South America, nearly every province in Canada, and many regions in the United States. Farmers and foresters in the outlands are discovering fresh, scorched circular areas in their fields and trees with unabating regularity.

But can this really be a new phenomenon? Haven't we preserved the records in history and lore of thousands of similar cases from antiquity to the present day?

This author wonders for example, just how very different the legendary "fairy ring" would appear from a circular area scorched into a bean field by a hovering or landing UFO. And what of the "wee people" folklore tells us who were seen cavorting about the shimmering lights of the fairy ring?

Perhaps a few centuries ago, our visitors, whoever they may be and wherever they may be from, did not have to be quite so careful.

What matter if the countryfolk happened to come upon them as they walked about collecting soil samples? Simply tell the bumpkins that they were "leprechauns" burying their gold and watch the greedy Earthlings run off for picks and shovels.

What matter if the countryfolk happened to watch them land to make repairs or to reconnoiter an area? Just pass a jug around, hop up and down a bit, and the simple Earthlings would conclude that the "wee people" were having a party. Later the clods would even believe that the ring that the craft burnt into the grass was possessed of magical properties.

But now in *Homo sapien's* nuclear age, the UFOnauts may have to be a bit more cautious. Earthlings rarely believe in "wee people," but they do believe in astronauts and moon landings and space ships. Seldom are the UFOnauts seen walking about any more, and it is an even rarer instance when any kind of contact is made.

One can only ponder the significance of the UFOnaut's gesture of wiping his forehead with the back of his hand that the Iowa farm boy observed. Could this touching of the forehead be a gesture of peace and good will? Or could the UFOnaut have been wiping the sweat from his brow as if to say: "This may be a great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live here!"

DETROIT'S STRANGE HOUSE OF GHOSTS

In the Detroit *Sunday News* for August 30, 1970, staff writer James A. Treloar quoted Dr. John Artley, an investigator for the Psychical Research Foundation, in regard to the eerie happenings in the Walter Thomas (a pseudonym) home in a Detroit suburb. Dr. Artley commented: "I have the distinct impression that there are valid paranormal things going on in this case."

Two psychical researchers from the Foundation and a psychiatrist formed a team of scientists that studied the ghostly events in the Thomas home for more than a year, long enough to term it a "classic haunting."

It was as long ago as 1960 that Frieda Thomas began hearing footsteps up in their attic. Mrs. Thomas has been a cripple since birth and she must use crutches in order to get around. She never went up to investigate the mysterious sounds, but she was certain that she heard them.

Frieda Thomas would sit up at night after her husband and her son, Danny, had gone to bed. She would tell them that that was her time to rest, to be alone with her thoughts for a while before bedtime.

But then she would hear those footsteps moving about in the attic, and she would have a great deal of food for thought.

For one thing, their attic was just a small, unfinished one, with no room for anyone to walk about. For another, their home was no creaking, sprawling haunted mansion along the surf-pounded Maine coast. They lived in the middle of a densely populated suburb of Detroit in a home that looked like thousands of other little brick houses that had been built after World War II.

Some nights, after the footsteps had ceased their self-appointed rounds, Frieda would hear what sounded like someone pounding on the side of the house with a thick club. But neither phenomenon occurred with any great regularity, and on the following morning when she would tell Walter and Danny about the footsteps and the pounding, everyone would have a good laugh about her mysterious night noises.

In September 1968, the haunting ceased to be amusing. Danny was seventeen, a factor to which the investigators would later attribute some importance.

Walter Thomas remembers that the first incident that really frightened them occurred in the basement. He and Danny had been playing pool in their basement recreation room, and when they finished, they placed the cues on the table. Danny went upstairs to read; Walter went into the kitchen to play cribbage with his wife.

"We heard something break in the basement," Walter recalled for journalist Treloar. "Danny and I went downstairs and found a cue stick snapped in half and lying on the floor. It was the first time there was something I couldn't explain. We were stunned. We didn't know what to think. It couldn't have rolled off the table."

One can appreciate the great psychokinetic force required to snap a pool cue in half. Soon, the noises became louder in a comparable scale of energy.

The Thomases began to hear something that could only be described as a box of empty tin cans crashing to the floor in their basement. They would rush down but find nothing that could have caused the metallic jangle of sound.

One night as Walter and Frieda lay in bed, they watched the lamp and radio begin to move across their nightstand. An invisible something was pulling on the doily on which the appliances stood.

On another evening, they watched in troubled fascination as the door to their wardrobe began swinging back and forth, opening and closing without any visible assistance.

A rocking chair began to tip back and forth, building momentum. Then it just stopped. There was no slowing down process. The chair simply ceased rocking as quickly as it had begun.

Once Frieda went to her dresser to discover that "something" had decided to switch all of the drawers.

"And there would be this whistling," Walter told the investigators. "It was just as plain as somebody sitting right next to you. It wasn't a tune or anything. It was just a sharp whistle, like the kind you'd use to get somebody's attention."

Danny began to act peculiarly, and his parents had difficulty rousing him from sleep in the mornings.

Frieda told reporters and researchers that they would throw cold water in Danny's face, but they just could not wake him up. At the same time, she noticed that Danny's body temperature had gone up. According to her thermometer, the teenager's body temperature registered a constant 101 degrees.

The concerned parents took their son to a hospital and presented him for exhaustive medical tests. The doctors could find no physical cause for Danny's lethargy and his high body temperature. The Thomases' family doctor advised that they take the teenager to a psychiatrist. Later, Frieda began visiting the psychiatrist as well.

The entire family had become nervous, easily upset. Tranquilizers were prescribed, but the phenomena continued.

About a year and a half before the story was released in the *Sunday News,* Dr. John Artley, an electrical engineer at Duke University and an investigator for the Psychical Research Foundation, began to explore the apparent psychic maelstrom that swirled throughout the Thomas home.

It was Dr. Artley's conclusion that the family may be haunted by a poltergeist.

Most readers of this book will know that a poltergeist (from the German for noisy ghost), while once considered a particularly nasty ghost or demon, is now thought to be ". . . the extension of some living person's mind."

Dr. Artley told reporter Treloar that such a theory was still "wide open," but ". . . it does appear that physical disturbances do occur in families where somebody is feeling intensely hostile, and is unable to communicate these feelings."

The researcher explained that, in the poltergeist theory, such a person is called "the agent" and he is consciously unaware of his role in the mysterious drama.

"Typically," Dr. Artley went on, "the agent is a teenager going through puberty or a woman in menopause.

"If one can accept what the family (the Thomases) reports, it would seem that both Danny and his mother are poltergeist agents. In each of the mysterious happenings, Mrs. Thomas and Danny seem to be the targets of the poltergeist attacks."

In the one attack directed at Walter—his wedding ring was removed from his finger and caused to vanish—the person who was hurt the most by the action was Frieda.

"I never take the ring off," Walter insisted. "It just disappeared right off my finger."

The Thomas family consented to undergo a battery of psychological tests. According to the investigators, the tests showed that the Thomases were unable to communicate with one another on any emotional level.

The psychological tests characterized Frieda as certainly not an unkind person, but ". . . terribly intense, inclined to be waspish."

Journalist Treloar wrote: "Her eyes blaze constantly, and her lips quiver with emotion. A visitor is immediately struck by her fire. But Walter and Danny seem oblivious to it. They respond to her words, but never to her emotions."

Walter Thomas, on the other hand, was characterized as being mild and self-effacing. So self-effacing, Dr. Artley commented, "that he may be destroying himself."

The teenaged Danny presented a much more complex task for character analysis. Treloar described him in this manner:

"He is a very large boy, flaccid from lack of exercise, beardless, and has a high-pitched voice. He rarely leaves the house. A fiction has grown up in the family that because Mrs. Thomas is crippled, Danny is needed at home all the time. Danny has never had a girl friend, or held a job. He dropped out of school two years ago when the unusual events became very active. He stays home, watches television, works on his stamp collection, vacuums the house, does dishes, and gossips with the neighbors. He's a very pleasant boy, as gracious, poised and straightforward as any parent could hope for."

But Dr. Artley noticed that Danny could also be malicious. Strangely enough, however, neither of his parents seemed to recognize any of their son's actions as being at all hostile toward them. Dr. Artley observed that such communication required another person who is willing to hear.

The psychical researchers felt that there was a great need for Danny to leave home, but the parents steadfastly resist such a suggestion. Each generation of Frieda Thomas' family has shown intense need for family unity.

"It's as though they felt the family were a bastion against a hostile world," Dr. Artley commented. "But we'd like to bring Danny to Durham with us, to test him to see if anything happens away from the family. Walter and Frieda, however, expect him to stay home indefinitely. The obvious need for Danny to leave home is being repressed."

At her psychiatrist's suggestion, Frieda began to keep a journal of the haunting about two years before the *Sunday News* release of the mysterious happenings in their home. The assignment seemed to become an obsession with Mrs. Thomas, and reporter Treloar said that she had written into it not only every eerie incident of the past two

years, but also her recollections of other personal occurrences going back to the genesis of the phenomena ten years before.

Treloar stated: "The log itself has become as mysterious as any of the events in the Thomas home. After the log was well along, Frieda's psychiatrist asked if he might read it. He took the log home to study at his leisure . . . and he began to hear odd pounding sounds coming from his attic.

"The doctor reported these events to the Psychical Research Foundation investigators, and said that the sounds he heard were not normal—that something mysterious was indeed happening."

Foundation researcher John Stump had heard odd noises in the Thomas home, but he had not observed anything dramatic that could erase his skepticism toward the case.

Then he asked to borrow the log and take it back to his apartment to study it carefully.

Water suddenly appeared on his chairs; a light came on even though he did not touch the switch; weird unexplainable noises sounded throughout his apartment.

Dr. Artley stated that during one of his three visits to the Thomas home in 1970, he heard a noise behind his back and turned in time to see a heavy, wooden bookcase rocking. He was completely alone in the room, and he said that there had been no traffic or other outside activity that might have set the bookcase in motion.

The Thomas family rejects the notion of a poltergeist, the idea that the haunting could be caused by an extension of one of their minds. The three of them firmly believe that their home is being visited by the ghost of Frieda's stepfather, Frank Hauser, who died on March 26, 1953, due to an overdose of sleeping pills. The Detroit police records list the death as a suicide, but Frieda believes that the pills may have been forced on her stepfather by her mother, who she feels is quite capable of murder.

Mrs. Thomas claimed that she had established communication with Frank Hauser's ghost through a system of tappings. She said that the entity identified itself as Hauser and stated ". . . something about his wife being to blame (for his death)."

Dr. Artley said that he would not rule out the possibility of a ghost having centered its energy on the Thomases, but he is more disposed to champion the poltergeist theory, that "some people are able to accomplish things we don't yet understand; that there's nothing 'supernatural' at the Thomas home—that these are natural events."

The psychical researcher went on to say that our culture too readily assumes that people like the Thomases are crazy, that our culture does not try to accept and understand such phenomena.

"It appears that an agent performs more intensively when he is under a great deal of stress," Dr. Artley remarked. "Then, if the person finds himself rejected by the society about him, he becomes even more stressed, and the physical disturbances occur more and more.

"If we were more supportive," the researcher maintained, "if people felt less guilt and anxiety when these things happen to them, I suspect we'd find many ghosts in many closets."

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